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Ali Mousavi

PERSEPOLIS

DISCOVERY AND AFTERLIFE OF A WORLD WONDER

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Cover image: The excavation of the eastern staircase of the Apadana, 1932.
From Mostafavi's album of Persepolis dated November 1933.

Photo © the Iran Bastan Museum (FIG. 8.7)

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*To my father to whom I owe my passion for the ruins of Takht-e Jamshid,
and to my mother who encouraged me to read biographies.*

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Acta Antiqua
AchHist	Achaemenid History Workshops
AHI	Herzfeld, E., <i>Archaeological History of Iran</i> , London, 1935.
AI	Acta Iranica
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History
AMI	Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran
AMIT	Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan
AO	Acta Orientalia
ArOr	Ars Orientalis
ArchAnz	Archäologischer Anzeiger
AJSLL	the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
BA	the Biblical Archaeologist
BAI	the Bulletin of the Asia Institute
BSOAS	the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
BT	Barresihāy-e Tārikhi
CHI	<i>Cambridge History of Iran</i>
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum
CP	Classical Philology
CRAIB	Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
CQ	Classical Quarterly
DA	Dossiers d'Archéologie
DAFI	Cahiers de la Délégation archéologique française en Iran
EncIr	Encyclopedia Iranica
EncIs	Encyclopaedia of Islam
EW	East and West
GB	Gozāreshhāy-e Bāstānshenāsi
HM	Honar va Mardom
HPE	Briant, P., <i>A History of the Persian Empire</i> , Winona Lake, Indiana, 2002.
IA	Iranica Antiqua
IAE	Herzfeld, E., <i>Iran in the Ancient East</i> , Oxford, 1940.
ILN	the Illustrated London News
IPA	Lecoq, P., <i>Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide</i> , Paris, 1997.
IrSt	Iranian Studies
JAOS	Journal of American Oriental Society
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
MBT	Majalley-e Bāstānshenāsi va Tārikh (Iranian Journal of Archaeology and History)
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
MII	Le Monde iranien et l'Islam
NIB	Nāmey-e Iran Bāstān
NC	Numismatic Chronicle
PFT	Hallock, R. T., <i>Persepolis Fortification Tablets</i> , Chicago, 1969.
PTT	Cameron, G. G., <i>Persepolis Treasury Tablets</i> , Chicago, 1948.
RA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie
REA	Revue des Études Anciennes
StIr	Studia Iranica
TQ	Tavoos Quarterly
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

FOREWORD BY DAVID STRONACH

This is a book that, above all else, fills a number of conspicuous gaps in modern treatments of Persepolis. Even if there are many books — and articles — that seek to explore one or another significant aspect of the principal Achaemenid Persian monuments at Persepolis, it has to be said that, until this moment, relatively little work has been done to examine the history of the site as a whole from the time of its inception down to the present day.

What emerges from Ali Mousavi's account is an absorbing picture of the many separate faces of Persepolis. Or, to put matters another way, this work gives us an opportunity to savour the vast changes in the perception of a single, focal site that took place over the course of many centuries. Almost from the time that work on the site was initiated by Darius the Great, possibly only a few years after he came to the throne in 522 BC, Persepolis would appear to have been viewed as a kind of mirror-image of the concept of Achaemenid Persian kingship. This is how Darius and his successors almost certainly viewed the splendour of their “home capital” (with its all-important northward extension to adjacent Naqsh-e Rostam: the site of the impressive rock-cut mausolea of the first four rulers of the line of Darius); and, if we keep in mind the comprehensive burning of Persepolis by Alexander in 330 BC, the very presence of the site would appear to have held similar connotations for the Macedonians.

Following a fresh look at the chronology and function of Achaemenid Persepolis (in Chapter I), and a detailed examination of the archaeological and other evidence for the burning of Persepolis (in Chapter II), Mousavi embarks on his main subject: what he agreeably refers to as the “after-life” of Persepolis. In this context he explores (in Chapter III) the considerable impact that the site had on, first, the local post-Achaemenid rulers of Fars, the Frataraka, as well as on the considerably later, far more powerful early kings of Sasanian Iran, who were quick to put their own stamp on the long-hallowed cliffs at Naqsh-e Rostam. But accurate historical memory did not long survive, and all too soon the true identity of Persepolis came to be almost entirely forgotten.¹

In such circumstances Persepolis came to be ascribed (as we are reminded in Chapter IV), to one or other of two popularly anointed “founders”. The first of these was Jamshid, the mythical, paramount hero-king of early Iran, who occupies a pre-eminent place in the national epic, preserved and immortalized in Ferdowsi's tenth century *Shahnama*. And the second was Solomon (much to the puzzlement of the earliest European travellers, who had no notion that Solomon figured prominently in the Koran as a ruler of exceptional wealth and wisdom).

At the same time it is especially interesting to learn that, from the tenth century onwards, the Buyids (not to mention other dynasts of later date) were acutely conscious of the presence of the ruins of Persepolis. Over time, in fact, the Buyids and others can be seen to have gone out of their way to identify themselves with these extraordinary ruins, customarily through the medium of carefully cut inscriptions.

It was also during this early medieval period that the site not only came to be associated with the mythical figure of Jamshid, but that its very construction came to be viewed as a wondrous creation that stood beyond the ingenuity of humankind. Accordingly, the massive, tightly jointed stonework of the site came to be attributed to supernatural agents, i.e. to “the work of a genius or a fairy”. Needless to say, the original identity of Persepolis — ancient Parsa — gradually became more and more deeply obscured beneath such layers of popular invention. Not surprisingly, therefore, those travellers who plied the high road between Isfahan and Shiraz in medieval times had

1 Even if the identity and location of Persepolis, and the fateful destruction of the site by Alexander, still appear to have been known to Al-Biruni, writing in the eleventh century.

no inkling of the true identity of the imposing ruins that flanked this immemorial highway.² At that time (and for many centuries thereafter) the ruins were therefore either known by the name of Takht-e Jamshid (or “the throne of Jamshid”) or were given the epithet Chelminar (i.e. “[the place of] many columns”).

One of the many strengths of Mousavi’s account is the close attention that he gives (in Chapter V) to the various “Travellers of the Enlightenment” and to the roles that they played in analyzing and recording the ruins as they found them. For reasons that have never been fully explored, Erich Schmidt himself did not choose to offer any coherent description of these pioneer contributions in his three-volume report on the work that he directed at Persepolis between 1935 and 1939. But it did not take long before this particular omission became, at least in certain academic quarters, something of a *cause célèbre*.

In a major review of Schmidt’s *Persepolis*, volume 1, R.D. Barnett found it appropriate to note that “the account of the American expedition” was introduced “without any survey, appreciation or discussion of the work of previous scholars at this site, save for passing references in footnotes”. With more than a touch of emotion, he went on to say: “This is unjust and unreasonable, for that work, although only surface work, was of very considerable value”,³ At much the same time I myself can also recall Professor Max Mallowan’s (never publicly proclaimed) sense of outrage at what he took to be Schmidt’s “lack of interest” in this specific, not negligible component of the long history of the site. In Schmidt’s defence, however, it is only appropriate to note that his hands were tied to no small extent by the often unpredictable ways of his enormously distinguished predecessor at Persepolis, Ernst Herzfeld. Not only was Schmidt’s own work “held up by a lack of information that should have been preserved and made available”,⁴ but because Schmidt could never know if Herzfeld was about to publish his prior discoveries, he initially refrained from excavating in areas where Herzfeld had once been active. Indeed, without the presence of any “excavation log” to account for all Herzfeld numerous separate activities at the site between 1931 and 1934, Schmidt was reduced to providing a strictly threadbare account of Herzfeld’s endeavours. In these circumstances it is at least possible that, even if Schmidt had at one time thought of providing a comprehensive, connected account of the earliest investigations at Persepolis, he could have ultimately reflected that this would offer too great a contrast to the no more than minimal remarks that he felt able to supply with reference to Herzfeld’s extended excavations. However this may be, this salient omission in Schmidt’s final publication has now been ably filled by Ali Mousavi’s perceptive treatment of this same topic.

In due course a more pragmatic, scientific sense of enquiry led to an enhanced interest in the contents of the site’s still indecipherable cuneiform inscriptions. In this context, it was Carsten Niebuhr’s productive stay at Persepolis in the latter half of the eighteenth century that allowed him to make the first truly accurate copies of a number of the inscriptions. Notwithstanding the fact that he was the last surviving member of the Danish “Expedition to Arabia”, he still had the necessary resilience to devote himself to this self-appointed task with singular success; and, as Mousavi notes in Chapter VI, it was the provision of this faithful record that not only helped such individuals as the German scholar, G.F. Grotefend, to begin to read Old Persian cuneiform for the first time, but it was this latter breakthrough that duly paved the way for the subsequent decipherment of both Akkadian and Elamite.

It is only fair to note, however, that not every early European initiative at Persepolis was of a necessarily positive character. In particular, the early nineteenth century hunt for antiquities, in which British diplomatic officials were undeniably prominent, represents one wholly regrettable

2 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 22; Stronach, “Pasargadae after Cyrus the Great: different paradigms for different times”, *Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Lectures in Iranian Studies*, pp. 71-94.

3 “Persepolis”, *Iraq* 19/1, 1957, p. 56.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

episode. Much more auspicious, as Mousavi also relates, were the efforts of a succession of gifted individuals to draw, photograph and otherwise record the nature of the visible ruins at Persepolis throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century. Especially refreshing is the story of the contributions of the charismatic and talented early nineteenth century artist, Sir Robert Ker Porter, who was, among other things, the first visitor to Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, to call the site by this name.⁵ Mousavi also pays special tribute to G.N. Curzon's careful autopsy of the site of Persepolis. Curzon was no unabashed admirer of Achaemenid art (especially with reference to its more repetitive characteristics), but he had a keen eye, an encyclopaedic range of knowledge, and many of his insights with reference to such sites as Persepolis and Pasargadae are still of value today.

In Chapter VIII Mousavi draws timely attention to a number of matters. These include the first stirrings of an Iranian interest in archaeology. This has long been a subject of fascination for one of Mousavi's mentors, Chahryar Adle, and it is of interest to see this perspective given appropriate notice in the present context. Also, as someone with a notable appetite for archival records, Mousavi is an especially knowledgeable guide in a chapter that covers, inter alia, the end of the French monopoly on excavations in Iran; the circumstances that opened the way for Ernst Herzfeld, the towering archaeological figure of the day, to excavate at Persepolis on behalf of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago; and the manner in which — in one of the more dramatic moments in the history of Iranian archaeology — Herzfeld's gifted field assistant, Friedrich Krefter, was able to uncover the gold and silver foundation tablets of Darius I that still stood in a protective stone box beneath the northeast corner of the main hall of the Apadana.

Hard on the heels of this success came a stunning reverse in Herzfeld's fortunes. As Mousavi indicates, there is still considerable confusion over whether or not Herzfeld offered two fragments of stone reliefs to the Crown Prince of Sweden at the time of the latter's visit to Persepolis in November 1934 or whether he also attempted to smuggle antiquities out of Iran as part of his personal baggage in the years 1933 and 1934. But however one chooses to judge matters, I find it strangely poignant that Herzfeld, who had done more than anyone else to bring the importance of Persepolis to public attention in Iran in the late 1920s was in the end obliged to leave the country in less than happy circumstances. More than this, it also appears that he was subsequently prevented from contributing to the final publications associated with the Oriental Institute's excavations at Persepolis. I can but hope, in fact, that he was at least aware of Ali-Asgar Hekmat's efforts to leave a door open for his possible return to Iran, in the event that he would choose to return to the country in order to continue his far-reaching studies.

The final chapter in the present volume, which is principally concerned with those excavations that took place at Persepolis between ca. 1940 and ca. 1980, is one that Ali Mousavi must have felt a deep obligation to write. The full-length reports on the excavations in question are each written in Persian and, as he himself tells us, he was able to meet with each of the main excavators. As a consequence the present study contains valuable summaries of these various, considerable endeavors that have otherwise attracted little notice outside the bounds of Iran. In this context, however, it is appropriate to note one pleasing exception to the rule: Chester G. Starr, an American Classicist, for example, was not unaware of the work of Akbar Tadjvidi.⁶ Indeed, he went out of his way to examine the well-preserved late Achaemenid baked bullae (showing Persians of rank overcoming Greek hoplites in combat) that were discovered in a sealed deposit near the summit of the east fortification wall of Persepolis during Tadjvidi's excavations in the late 1960s.⁷

5 Stronach, *Pasargadae*, p. 3.

6 Starr, "Greeks and the Persians in the fourth century B.C. (part II)", *IA* 12, p. 74

7 Tadjvidi, "Persepolis, excavation report", *Iran* 8, p. 187.

Last but not least, I myself place not a little value on the kind of anecdotal reflections with which Ali concludes his wide-ranging account. In the broad sweep of Iranian archaeology I believe there should be at least some room for the anecdotal history of the subject. On long journeys, when I was at the wheel of my Land Rover, Professor George Cameron, a frequent visitor to Iran in the 1970s, would describe to me, for example, his experiences as a junior member of Erich Schmidt's excavation team at Persepolis in the late 1930s. He told me how, as often as not, he would never have an opportunity to leave the Persepolis Terrace for up to six months at a time. In fact, the one daily diversion that helped to mitigate the rather unvarying round of constant work was the brainchild of the director's gifted and dynamic wife, Mary-Helen Warden Schmidt. She somehow managed to create a garden high up on the steep rock slope overlooking the site. And as the sun would begin to set over the vast expanse of the Marvdasht plain, the members of the expedition would repair, at the end of the day, to take tea in this mini Persian paradise!

In the spirit of such recollections, I confess to enjoying the thought of a very young Ali Mousavi, scampering about the site of Persepolis (to which he was first brought by his father, the noted archaeologist, when he was no more than four years old). With such precocious learning opportunities stretched out over something close to a decade (while his father fulfilled various successive field responsibilities at the site), it is no wonder that Ali's adult career took the course that it did. At all events, I know I was delighted, as was Professor Guitty Azarpay, when he elected to join the graduate programme of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, as the programme's first Guitty Azarpay Fellow. And I am now still more pleased that my sometime student, who is currently the Assistant Curator for Ancient Iranian and Near Eastern Art at the Los Angeles County Museum, has produced the present, extremely worthwhile contribution to Iranian archaeology.

*Les grands édifices, comme les grandes montagnes,
sont l'ouvrage des siècles.*
(Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*)

INTRODUCTION

The ruins at Takht-e Jamshid, known as Persepolis, are among the most formidable monuments that have gained a measure of symbolic status. A glance at the considerable number of scholarly and amateur publications on Persepolis suffices to show the utmost importance of the monuments as well as an irresistible fascination for the ruins expressed by both specialists and laypersons. One would think there is hardly room for another volume on the archaeology of Persepolis, a detailed description of its buildings, the meaning of their iconography and the like, and indeed this book is not intended to be one. It deals above all with a particular aspect of the archaeology of the site: Persepolis' afterlife.

In a critical review of Erich Schmidt's sumptuously published report, *Persepolis*, volume 1, Richard David Barnett, then Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities (now Middle East) at the British Museum, writes: "...we are rather abruptly introduced into the account of the American expedition without any survey, appreciation or discussion of the work of previous scholars at this site, save for passing references in footnotes. This is unjust and unreasonable, for that work, although only surface work, was of very considerable value".¹ Barnett's review reminds us of the lack of a substantial survey of the studies and research which preceded the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis. This is why I realized that there was an imperative need for a compendium dealing with a total history of the archaeological exploration at Persepolis aimed at filling this gap. Besides, there were strong personal reasons for me to be involved in such an undertaking. There is no doubt that the impressive allure of the columns and doors, sculptures depicting fantastic creatures of all sorts or long processions of nobles, various peoples and soldiers can leave a powerful impression in the memory of a boy of five or six years old, as I was in the early 1970s. Nu-

merous images marked my memory: the gigantic columns towering above a myriad of reliefs, playing hide-and-seek with Dr. Tadjvidi's twins, Afshin and Ramin, and my first attendance of the *son et lumière* where I watched and was horrified by the approach of Alexander's army... In later visits to the site, I was amazed by the numerous graffiti left by travelers throughout the centuries, either in the form of simple signatures or names, or in the form of elegantly engraved poems. I became more and more intrigued by the question of how Persepolis was seen and explored through the ages that succeeded the Macedonian sack of the city in 330 B.C.

If something has to be said of the sources which I used in writing this book, special mention should be made of oral history as well as published and unpublished reports and documents. This collection of archaeologists' testimony and anecdotes about their own experiences at the site gave me an inside perspective into the subject. Being the son of an archaeologist offered me the opportunity to have a number of experiences and to make acquaintances, which particularly inspired and encouraged me to carry out this research and finally to write on the history of archaeological exploration at Persepolis. My first and best teacher has always been my father, Mahmoud Mousavi, who participated in the last excavations at the site in the late 1960s/early 1970s, first as a field archaeologist and then as a field director under Ali-Akbar Tadjvidi. From him I learned a great deal about the excavations carried out by Tadjvidi, whom I remember well, first as my father's respected director often dressed in white, and later as his refined and artistically talented colleague. He had a strong presence at the excavation; not that he was always physically present in the field, but his leadership was strongly felt at Persepolis. I was blessed enough to meet Ali Sami in the latter years of his life. Sami was one of the most

1 Barnett, "Persepolis", *Iraq* 19/1, 1957, p. 56.

fascinating archaeologists I have ever met. His erudition and keen knowledge of the site, which he generously shared with me, was an exceptional source of information and inspiration for my thirst to learn about Persepolis. I also had the opportunity to correspond with Ali Hakemi, who had initially been Sami's architect and draughtsman in Fars in the 1950s before becoming famous for his own excavations at Kaluraz in Gilan, and at Shahdad on the fringes of the Dasht-e Lut. Last but certainly not least was Ali Shapur Shahbazi, whom I knew from my childhood. He was the living encyclopaedia of Persepolis. Having strong opinions on various aspects of the archaeology, history, and art history of the ruins, discussing Persepolitan problems with him was often not easy, but it was always rewarding.

A significant development of the past twenty years has been a greater degree of access to archival documents, of which I have tried to make effective use in the present book. The most important body of unpublished archives is what is called the "discontinued archive" (Bāyegāniy-e Rāked) of the Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran, to which I had exceptional access for a very limited period of time in 1999. Consulting the Iranian archival documents provided me with invaluable information on the archaeological legislation and excavation process in Iran. My further research in the French National Archives in Paris introduced me to the crucial years of the 1920s-30s during which a Franco-German rivalry resulted in the abolition of the French Monopoly on archaeological excavations in Iran (in 1927) and the establishment of the first Iranian Law of Antiquities (approved in 1930). This paved the way for the beginning of systematic excavations at Persepolis. Two other sources must be mentioned here. Ernst Herzfeld's papers, photographs, and notebooks preserved in the Freer and Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C., and the archives of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. These two collections, indispensable for any study on Persepolis, have been used throughout the present book. Friedrich Krefter's unpublished diary, now in the possession

of his son, Heiko Krefter, includes equally valuable details on the early part of the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis. Another relatively unknown archive is Hans-Wichart von Busse's notes, letters, and photographs presently in the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection in Boston.

The first chapter of this book is written with the intention of contextualizing the archaeology of Parsa, or the City of Persepolis. The descriptions of different buildings and structures given in this section is not intended to compete with the authoritative publications on Persepolis but to approach other studies such as the chronology of the monuments and the function of the site. Furthermore, references to the archaeological findings and interpretive strategies of Iranian excavations at the site have been rare in Western scholarship. Thus, a descriptive survey of the discoveries by Sami and Tadjvidi in the Southern plain adjacent to the Terrace seems appropriate. I have tried to include many unpublished visual documents (photographs, drawings, maps) related to those excavations. Whenever I could, I used information drawn from travellers' accounts to give a full history of each building unit or architectural complex.

The sack of Parsa and its subsequent destruction is still a problematic subject. Two major bodies of evidence, historical and archaeological, are combined here to provide a clear picture of the reasons for the burning of the city and for the magnitude of the Macedonian-inflicted destruction. The main problem is to reconcile modern Classicist historians' interpretation of Alexander's behaviour with the archaeological facts. Whereas most of the modern historians of Alexander tend to believe that the decision to burn the city was a premeditated act and that the Macedonians set fire to a specific part of the city (on the Terrace), the archaeological evidence does not support such an assumption. The results from the Iranian excavations in the 1970s revealed traces of conflagration throughout the remains of the city. Another part of this chapter deals with the subsequent episodes of destruction which took place in the course of the centuries. Again, testimonies gleaned from travel-

lers' accounts and observations are significant in that they reveal that human vandalism was the most destructive factor.

Little is widely known about how Iranians have considered Persepolis from the time soon after its sack by the army of Alexander of Macedon in 330 B.C. up into modern centuries. Persepolis fell into oblivion, but its whereabouts was certainly not forgotten. It seems that the ruins did not interest the Greeks of Hellenistic times. The incident of Peukestas organizing a feast at the site around 316 B.C. is an exception, and the remains of a later architectural complex known as the Fratadara Temple does not sustain the thesis of a Hellenized Persis. The reconstruction of the Persis dynasty solely based on unprovenanced coins has never been attested by archaeological facts, at least for its earlier phases. Not a single coin going back to the early rulers of the dynasty has ever been found in archaeological excavations on the Terrace. By the time the Sasanians took over the control of Fars, Persepolis had long been replaced by a new settlement known by the name of Istakhr located 6 km to the north. This period witnessed the resurrection of Persian memory. The City of Persians took the popular name of *Sad-Sotun* (hundred columns). This was the beginning of the mythological traditions that sought to explain the existence of the ruins. I believe the question of whether or not the Sasanians knew anything about the existence of the Achaemenids is irrelevant here. They were, without doubt, conscious that there had been kings before them. But more important is their way of relating to the past by seeing in the ruins the deeds of their legendary ancestors. It is this particular form of connection between memory and imagination that is at the root of the Iranian tradition relating to the monuments of Takht-e Jamshid. The prevailing tradition, which held legendary kings of Persia responsible for the construction of the ruined palaces, must have marked the memory of the Sasanians. This was the time when the Achaemenid kings became legends connected to the perception of ancient Iran.

The extensive use of texts at Persepolis shows that the builders of the site were engaged with the idea that other human beings would look at their deeds. At Persepolis memory is stored in the form of inscriptions that carry the mark of time. The architecture had to be identified by means of epigraphic documents. The inscriptions establish the authenticity of the buildings. We know that Darius ordered the concealment of the Foundation plaques beneath the walls of the Apadana. And some of Xerxes' inscriptions, like the ones on the upper parts of the Apadana's towers or the Gate of All Lands, could hardly have been seen by contemporary visitors. As Alain Schnapp writes, "memory needs the earth in order to survive whether inscribed in stone, brick, parchment or in human memory".² In using their capacity for observation, in exercising their memory, in inventing scripts which their lasting (but not immediate historical) successors would eventually know how to decipher, the builders of Persepolis have consciously attempted to record their present, to transmit to the future traces of their activities. The monumental art of the Great Kings was a challenge to time.

The continuity of the enterprise was assured when the Sasanians added new inscriptions to the old ones. Writing was the privileged means of an extraordinary, silent contact between generations. This tradition of identifying with the past continued at Persepolis for centuries, until the mid-twentieth century. The Muslim conquest of Sasanian Iran did not alter this perception of the past. There is nothing contradictory in attributing the ruins to Jamshid, the legendary king of Iran, and to Solomon, the biblical prophet with supernatural power. This simply reflects the conversion of fire temples to mosques, and does not indicate a socio-cultural rupture as some scholars tend to believe. The inscriptions at the site were resumed in the tenth century, and were later manifested in the form of poems. These poems engraved on the stone walls of the ruins are voices raised in defence of the living memory.

2 Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past*, p. 24.

They are the leitmotiv of Persepolis resonating in its long durée. My major source in regard to this period is the outstanding work of Muhammad-Taqi Mostafavi who undertook the meticulous task of finding, copying, and translating twenty-five inscriptions left by various rulers who visited the ruins from the fourth to the nineteenth centuries.³

The rediscovery of Persepolis by the West in the early modern era has been a captivating topic of growing interest in academic research and exhibition presentation. Whereas the travellers and adventurers of the Enlightened Europe came to the East from different backgrounds and for various reasons, the majority of them became fascinated by the ruins situated on their way to the capital cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, and Tehran. At the heart of the third chapter the reader will discover a handful of creative minds who, over the centuries, championed and finally established the idea of the great antiquity of the ruins of Persepolis. In this regard, three principal publications preceded the present work: Alfons Gabriel's pioneer survey of the history of explorations in Iran (*Die Erforschung Persiens*, Vienna, 1951), Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg's study of the Achaemenid monuments as seen by Western travellers ("Through travellers' eyes", *Achaemenid History* VII, Leiden), and the extremely useful compilation of travellers' accounts of Persepolis by Antonio Invernizzi (*Il genio vagante: Babilonia, Ctesifonte, Persepoli in racconti di viaggio e testimonianze dei secoli XII-XVIII*, Torino, 2005). The chapter concerning the Western travellers' exploration of Persepolis complements previous studies with regard to the process that led to the identification of the ruins of Chelmenar as the city of Persians recorded in Classical sources. Emphasis has been given to the archaeological exploration of the ruins, such as Chardin's venture into the subterranean canals, and his description of the remains of the city, De Bruijn's attempt to remove sculptures from the site, and the excavations of various kinds that were undertaken, for example, by British dip-

lomats. One of the major accomplishments of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century explorations was the accumulation of a sufficient body of texts that resulted in the decipherment of cuneiform script. Although there are highly specialized manuals and publications dealing with the subject, the decipherment of cuneiform is an inseparable part of the history of archaeological discoveries at Persepolis.

Persepolis in the nineteenth century witnessed a numbers of firsts and has been treated in a separate chapter. The first systematic excavations of the ruins date to the early years of that century. The first reliable illustrations, either in the form of engravings and sketches or photographs, were produced also between the 1840s and 1860s. The nineteenth century was also the time of emerging archaeology in Iran. Herbert Weld's (known also as Weld-Blundell) investigations at Persepolis, combined with his enterprise of obtaining casts of the sculptures, are particularly significant in that they reveal the excavator's interest in illustrating the remains of the city outside the Terrace. Lord Curzon's well-researched study of the site and its history was also published before the end of the nineteenth century. Curzon's account has never been surpassed by subsequent publications and has always been praised for its acumen and exceptionally eloquent style.

The first years of the twentieth century saw a keen interest in excavating the ancient ruins of Persepolis—an epic enterprise that had the effect of catalyzing national interest in archaeological activity in Iran. What were the processes that inspired this attention, giving new national status to the place? How did Iran in those years come to see the site as a monument of Iranian history *par excellence*, the exploration of which would influence the future of archaeological activities in Iran? To what extent have the efforts of centuries of exploration at Persepolis contributed to our present knowledge of Iranian history and that of the Achaemenid period? In addressing such questions, the following two chapters (five and six)

3 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, pp. 216-230.

will review selected key evidence of early Iranian engagement with the site, which is reflected in the government's support of Ernst Herzfeld's excavations at Persepolis. This is followed by another chapter (seven) that explores the Iranian archaeological excavations and (the Iranian archaeological excavations and visual documentation at Persepolis) visual documentation at Persepolis, highlighting the Iranian perspectives and priorities by featuring published work in Persian that has achieved little attention in the West, as well as recently accessed Iranian archival material.⁴ The study of the period has not been without challenges because of shortcomings in the quality and selection of the excavation reports published in the 1950s and 1960s. Ali Sami's excavations in the Southern plain, on the ruins of the city, were never published. My attempts to get hold of his unpublished notes and photographs were regrettably unsuccessful. Writing on the last Iranian excavations at Persepolis was facilitated by the available published reports, and my access to the unpublished notes and photographs. Research in the Iranian archives was also rewarding in that I found Tadjvidi's proposal to the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Arts for his excavation project at Persepolis.

I think it is still premature to write the history of archaeological activities at Persepolis during the past three decades. It is certain that the restoration work was interrupted, and the site experienced challenges in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution. Nevertheless, it did not take a long time for the new political regime to reconcile itself with Persepolis, and the site soon became the focal point of attention for the government's cultural heritage projects. The final pages of the present book outline the major achievements of the past years with cautious optimism that the passage of time will result in a full, balanced reassessment of these thirty years of the site's history.

A few words must be said concerning the style and format of this book. Archaeological reports and books are full of lists of artefacts and technical terms or jargon to such an extent that some of them are barely readable. Throughout this book I have tried to avoid using jargon, for the sake of clarity. The use of diacritics is reduced, and Persian terms and names are transliterated into their widely accepted forms. Wherever it was possible I included quotations in their original language, i.e. in English or in French, two Western languages which are widely read and understood. Excerpts from sources written in other languages (Greek, Latin, German, Spanish, Persian, and Arabic) have been given in translation. As for the references, I dare to say that among some five hundred sources used for the compilation of this book, there are none that I have not seen or read. After being misdirected and confused several times by the dishonest practice of copying bibliographies and references, which has regrettably become a common practice even in some highly respected academic circles, I was inclined to prefer the path of pedantry and honesty to that of haste, inaccuracy, and excess. As regards the question of style and readership, I have made an effort to draw a line between popular usage and academic precision at the risk of being reproached by some of my colleagues. The illustrations in this book were carefully selected and integrated with the text in order to complement rather than to decorate the text.

The trajectory of this book follows a path taken by the forerunners of the field living in a different world with preoccupations other than ours, but who paved the way for us, who left us publications and documents, creating a considerable amount of information. I think that nothing can describe our debt to their work better than these words by Ferdowsi:

All have gone sweeping in the garden of lore;
And what I tell has all been told before.

4 The Iranian excavation received little attention in the West (Mousavi, "Persepolis in retrospect: histories of discovery and archaeological exploration at the ruins of ancient Parseh", *ArOr* 32, p. 211).

I

PERSEPOLIS: A SURVEY OF THE SITE, ITS CHRONOLOGY AND FUNCTION

The magnificent remains of Persepolis have been often described and studied by travellers, scholars, art historians, archaeologists, and even amateurs. It is with great reserve that the author attempts to give a succinct description of them, or to vie with the major references, of which I can mention but a selection: the best detailed archaeological study of the ruins including a report on the archaeological excavations carried out by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago is undoubtedly Erich Schmidt's *Persepolis I-III*, Chicago, 1957-1972. Further studies on structures and restorations projects have been published by Ann Brit Tilia: *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fars*, vols. I and II, Rome, 1972-1978. Ali Sami's excavations have been summarized in the English translation of his book entitled *Persepolis* (Takht-i Jamshid), Shiraz, 1958. The major publication for later excavations is Ali-Akbar Tadjvidi's final report in Persian, *Dānestanihāy-e novin darbārey-e honar va bāstānshenāsiy-e asr-e hakhāmaneshi bar bonyād-e kāvosshāy-e panjsāley-e Takht-e Jamshid*, Tehran, 1355 H.S./1976. The best authoritative guide to Persepolis has been written by Ali Shapur Shahbazi: *Persepolis Illustrated*, Tehran, 1976 (with a revised edition published in 2002). Two other major publications in Persian are worth mentioning here: Hossein Bassiri's *Rāhnamāy-e Takht-e Jamshid* (A Guide to Persepolis) and M. T. Mostafavi, *Sharh-e ejmāliyeh āsār-e Takht-e Jamshid* (A General Description of the Remains at Takht-e Jamshid); these are both significant in that they include the medieval remains at the site such as inscriptions and graffiti in Middle Persian and a number of anecdotes on the history of excavations at Perse-

polis. Other archaeological studies and excavation reports are to be found in the bibliography of the present book. Still, for the purpose of the present study, the following description is necessary because it will provide an overview of the site and its major structures, which will be frequently referred to in the following chapters.

THE NAME

The ancient name of the site as written on king Xerxes' trilingual inscription on the Gate of All Lands is *Parsa*. The name also occurs in the Fortification and Treasury tablets in its Elamite form, *Ba-ir-ša*.¹ But it is not clear whether the name designated specifically the stone platform and its immediate surroundings, or if it was applied to the whole area including the sites of Naqsh-e Rostam and Istakhr. The Greeks did not know of Persepolis (περσέπολις) directly until Alexander's conquest of the Persian empire. Not even Ctesias, the Greek physician in the court of Artaxerxes II, had ever seen the site. Cleitarchus was the first to mention the name, which was subsequently used by Diodorus of Sicily in the first century B.C. (*The Historical Library*, Book XVII). The name *Perseptolis* used by Aeschylus in the fifth century B.C. would mean the "destroyer of cities" (*The Persians*, 15); the City of the Persians would be *Persopolis*.² Aeschylus' wordplay with the Greek word "perseptolis" (περσέπτολις) is untranslatable into English because the use of the past tense of the Greek verb "perthō" (to sack) is "persa" or "pers-e". Aeschylus' idea behind such confusion is that the destiny of the Persians

1 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 9, note 51.

2 Shahbazi, "From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid", *AMI* 10, p. 197.

was to wage wars and sack cities.³ According to Herzfeld, it was an allusion to the *Iliou per-sis* (Destruction of Ilium), an ancient Greek epic of the seventh century B.C.⁴ The name had not been so much heard of outside Persia, and became known after the capture and burning of the city by the Macedonians. After the conflagration, the name vanishes from existence, and reappears after a blank interval of Seleucid dominion, during which the locality retained sufficient importance to be plundered by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 B.C.⁵ The ancient name of the place is mentioned for the last time by Ammianus Marcellinus in A.D. 363 on the occasion of his description of the geography of Persia.⁶

THE CITY

The plan of the new foundation envisaged a citadel as the core of a larger city that was to expand into the surrounding plain of Marvdasht (figs. 1.1 and 1.2, pls. 1-2).⁷ For this purpose, remarkable preliminary operations had to be accomplished. The first stage was to prepare the promontory of the mountain, to install the drainage system, and erect the huge side walls in order to build the platform; some 125,000 square metres of the slopes of Kuh-

Rahmat had to be levelled.⁸ For the sake of aesthetics, and also for the solidity of the monument, the royal architects erected a high, massive platform, filling depressions with rocks and pebbles, and scraping the elevations. Such a raised platform, having the appearance of an extensive terrace, was necessary to contain the rock-filled central mass. It was at the same time that an elaborate drainage system was installed. Then the architects of Darius covered the surface of the platform, taking advantage of the natural irregularities of the terrain to create a harmonious surface. In this way, Persepolis's palaces, audience halls and other royal buildings were constructed on a huge, multi-terraced platform. As can still be seen today, the buildings upon the platform are not on the same level; the most elevated, not counting Palace 'D' or the "Pebble Hill", is the Palace of Xerxes (Hadish), and the lowest is the Treasury.

The city of Persepolis consisted of two major sectors: the citadel and the city (fig. 1.3). The citadel, covering 12 hectares of the city's 50 hectares area, is composed of an outer area, roughly triangular (500 × 200 m), a middle area (800 × 230 m), and the stone platform upon which are located the palatial buildings of the city.⁹ Roughly quadrilateral, 300 m on the north, 290 on the south, 300 m on the

3 Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 4; *Persians* by Aeschylus, translated into English by Stratos Constantinidis, p. 28, note 68, unpublished manuscript, Department of Theatre, Ohio State University, Columbus, 2009. G. Radet attributes the origin of the word to Callisthenes, Alexander's Greek historian (Radet, *Alexandre le Grand*, p. 198).

4 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 45.

5 Shahbazi, "From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid", *AMI* 10, p. 199. The source referring to the sack of the city (if ever such a city existed at that time) is dubious. It is only mentioned in the *Second Book of the Maccabees* (IX, 1, 2), which is a Greek abridgement of an earlier history in Hebrew dealing with the revolt of the Maccabees in Judea.

6 Shahbazi, "From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid", *AMI* 10, p. 199. Again, it is not certain whether the Roman historian refers to the Achaemenid site or there was another place known as the "city of Persians". *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus*, translated by C. D. Yonge, London, 1894, p. 338.

7 The occupied surface probably included the whole area between Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam. In this vast area of 20 km², archaeological surveys have so far detected five royal sectors, including the citadel and its adjacent constructions, and a large number of sites, irrigation works, and roads dating from the Achaemenid period (Sumner, "Achaemenid settlement in the Persepolis plain", *AJA* 90/1, pp. 8-10, ill. 3; Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, pp. 396-410).

8 According to Shahbazi, the original name of the mountain behind Persepolis is *Mithrāhyā Kaufā* (Mithra's Mountain). The term survived in medieval times as *Kohmehr* (Kuh-e Mehr). In the thirteenth century *mehr* was replaced by its Arabic equivalent, *rahmat*, and thus the name Kuh-e Rahmat or Mount of Mercy came to be introduced (Shahbazi, "New aspects of Persepolitan studies", *Gymnasium* 85, p. 490).

9 Kleiss, "Beobachtungen auf dem Burgberg von Persepolis", *AMI* 25, p. 160.

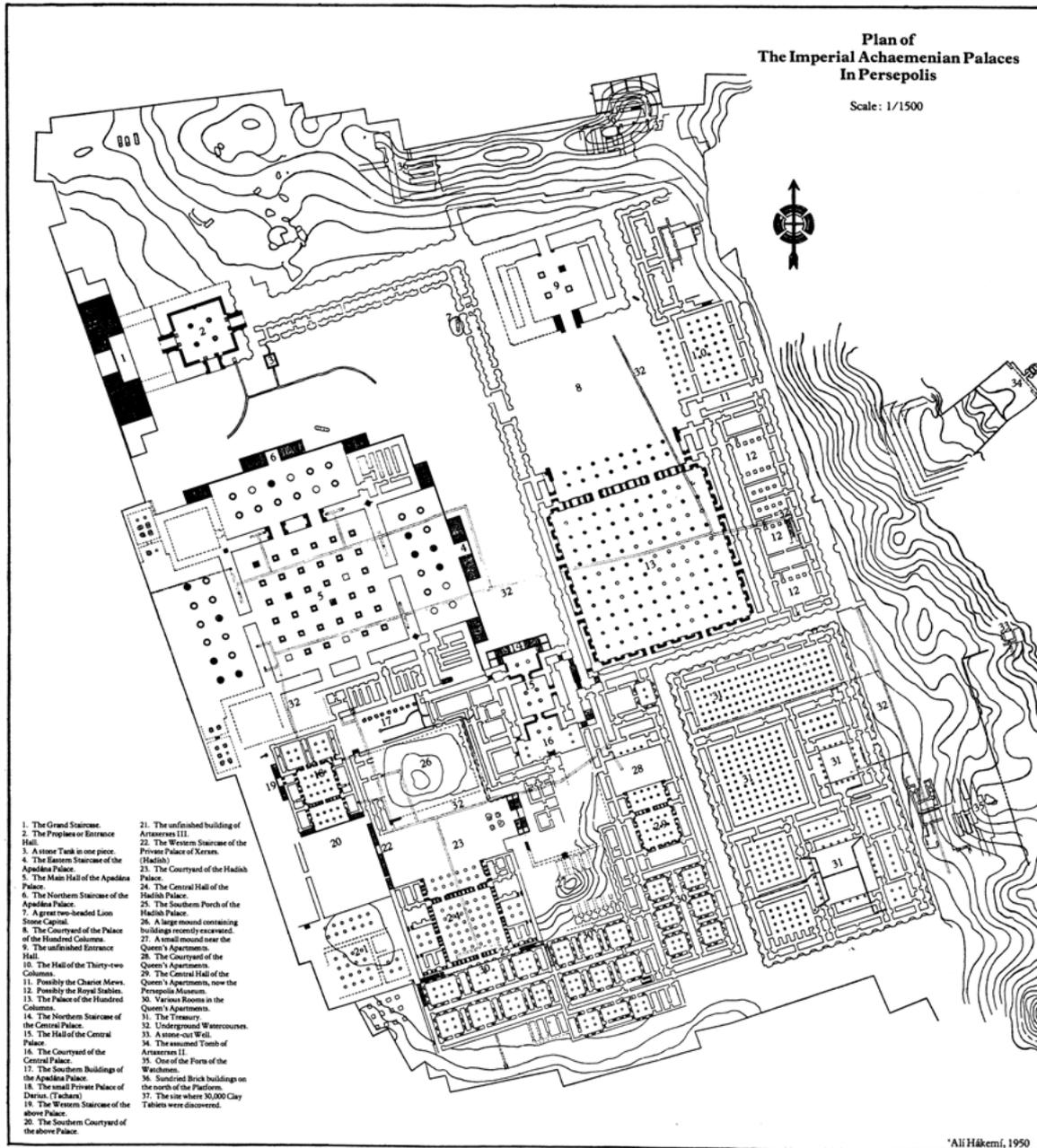


FIG. 1.1 Plan of Persepolis redrawn with additions by Ali Hakemi in 1950 (after Mostafavi). *Legend of the numbers:* 1. Main stairway. 2. Gate of All Lands. 3. Monolith stone basin. 4. The eastern staircase of the Apadana. 5. Main hall of the Apadana. 6. The northern staircase of the Apadana. 7. A great double-headed lion stone capital. 8. The courtyard of the Hall of a Hundred Columns. 9. The Unfinished Gate. 10. The Thirty-two columned hall. 11. Possibly the chariot mews. 12. The Royal Stables. 13. Hall of a Hundred Columns. 14. The northern staircase of the Central Palace. 15. The main hall of the Central Palace. 16. The courtyard of the Central Palace. 17. The southern buildings of the Apadana. 18. The Palace of Darius (Tachara). 19. The western staircase of the Tachara. 20. The southern courtyard of the Tachara. 21. Palace 'H'. 22. The western staircase of the Hadish. 23. The courtyard of the Hadish. 24. The central hall of the Hadish. 25. The southern porch of the Hadish. 26. Palace 'G'. 27. Palace 'D'. 28. The northern courtyard of the Queen's Apartments (the Harem). 29. The Central Hall of the Queen's Apartments. 30. Rooms in the Queen's Apartments. 31. The Treasury. 32. Drainage canals. 33. The stone-cut well. 34. The assumed tomb of Artaxerxes III. 35. One of the towers of the eastern fortifications. 36. One of the towers of the northern fortifications. 37. The north-eastern tower.



FIG. 1.2 General view of Persepolis in the early 1970s (Photo: M. Mousavi).

east, and 455 m on the west, the platform is, in fact, formed by a thick outer retaining wall filled in with debris. With a length of 300 m, the northern wall is the lowest wall of the platform. At its eastern end it joins the northern promontory of Kuh-e Rahmat, and its western end, following a northward deviation, abuts the quarrying fragments of a rock at the foot of the mountain. Remnants of these fragments can still be seen at the north-western corner of the wall outside the platform area. Such traces made some scholars believe that a stone stairway or path was to be installed here as a secondary entrance to the platform. Lying on the ground about 10 m south of this presumed entrance, there are three sharp-edged rock slabs which may be the remnants of a gateway.

Dieulafoy, who traced a water canal in this area, believed the carriageway to have run on top of this canal, which had been dug following the slope of the mountain so as to directly reach the platform.¹⁰ This is why Krefter indicates that this entrance may have been designed for the passage of the royal horse-carriages onto the platform. Krefter mentions this area as “provisorisches Arbeitstor”.¹¹ Since some constructions were still unfinished when the city was captured in 330 B.C., and one of the quarries for taking building stones for the Terrace is just near this entrance, Krefter has drawn it as a provisional working-and-transport gate of all kind of material as well as workmen for construction activities on the Terrace.¹² Herzfeld also considered it possible

10 Dieulafoy, *L'Art antique de la Perse*, vol. 2, Paris, 1884-89, pl. 17.

11 Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, pl. 36, No. 29.

12 Personal communication, Friedrich Krefter, December 10, 1987.

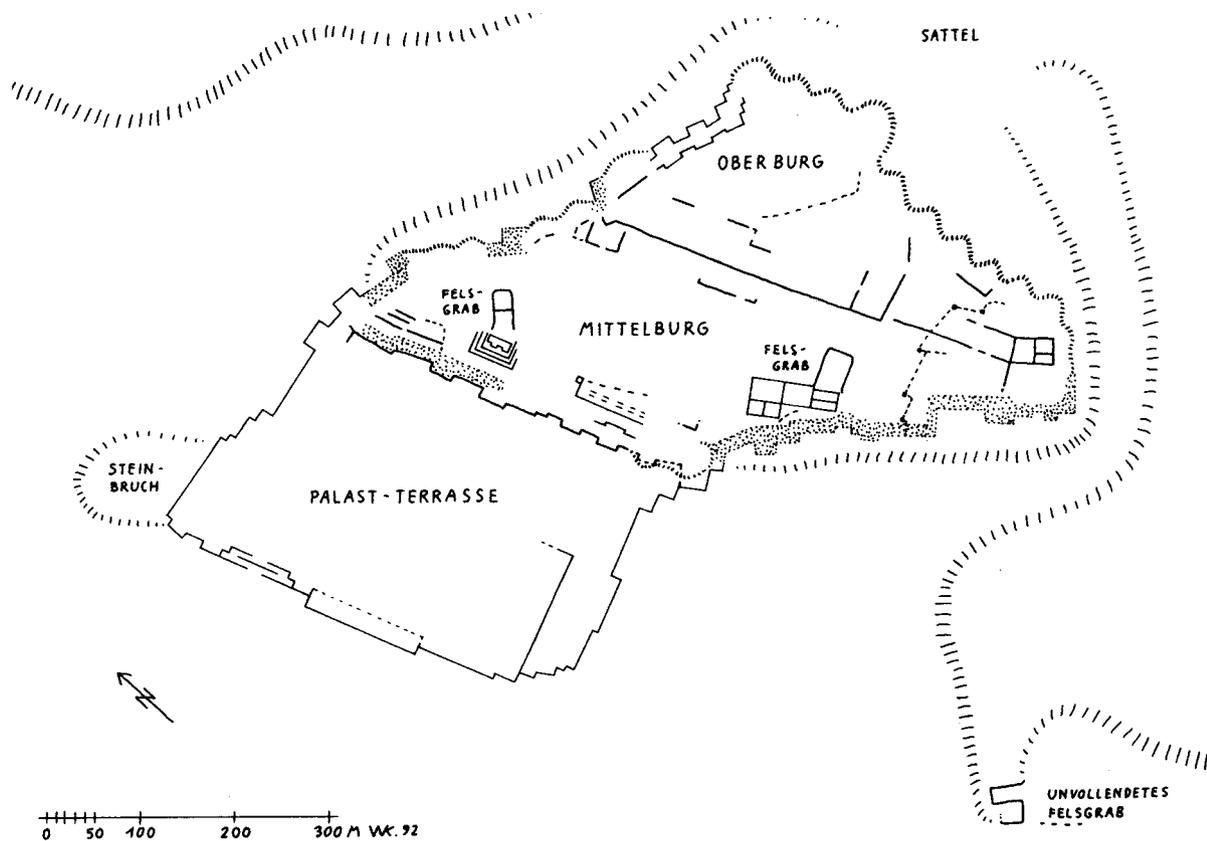


FIG. 1.3 The citadel and its fortifications as reconstructed by Wolfram Kleiss (after Kleiss).

that steps in the bedrock approaching the level of the Terrace at this spot led to a small gate.¹³ Schmidt, having found no substantial trace of such a gate or entrance, writes that “one can only speculate on the intention of the founder of the site to construct an entrance at that point”.¹⁴

The western wall is the longest, and visibly the highest wall of the platform, running from the north-west to the south-east. Its height at the foot of the western portico of the Apadana reaches 18 m. The surface of this wall has been smoothed except for its lower parts where traces of natural bedrock are still visible. The edge of the western wall has been widened in order to accommodate the western portico of the Apadana, which could be seen from a distance. It is in the northern section of

this wall that the monumental staircase of the citadel was situated.

The southern wall displaying a series of recesses in its western corner comprises two, inner and outer, sections. The inner section is higher, almost on a level with the western wall. It seems that the outer section is a protruding part of the inner section. Indeed, parts of the southern wall display a discontinuity in its masonry which indicates an essential change in the general arrangement and original design of the platform at this point (fig. 1.4).¹⁵ The outer section of the wall bears the oldest and longest inscription of the site (fig. 1.5). Carved on a large slab 7.20 m long, at a height of 2 m above the present level of the plain, this trilingual inscription differs from the other Achaemenid inscriptions of the

13 Herzfeld, *AMI* 1, p. 21.

14 Schmidt, *Persepolis* I, p. 64.

15 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e Novin*, pp. 56-61; Tilia, *Studies and Restorations* II, pp. 12-14, fig. 3, pls. VIII-IX.



FIG. 1.4 Southern wall of the Terrace.

site. Unlike other inscriptions in which the three texts display the same contents, here three scripts have been used in four different texts with four different contents. On the left hand, at the western end of the slab, two texts are in Old Persian, in the middle is the Elamite text, and the Babylonian text is placed at the eastern end. It is in the Elamite text that Darius calls the site a “fortress”:¹⁶

I, Darius, great king, king of kings, king of lands, king upon this earth son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian.

And Darius king says: As for the fact that upon this place this fortress was built, formerly here a fortress had not been built. By the grace of Ahura-

mazda I built this fortress. And Ahuramazda was of such a mind, together with all the gods, that this fortress should be built. And so I built it. And I built it secure and beautiful and adequate, just as I was intending to.

And Darius king says: Me may Ahuramazda, together with all the gods, protect, as well as this fortress. And, furthermore, whatever has been erected in this place, may it not be kindly to what any hostile man ever counts doing.

It is quite possible that the main entrance to the citadel was from the south where the Foundation inscription is located. In an interesting article, Wolfram Kleiss suggests that the layout of the Persepolis Terrace had a north-south orientation. According to Kleiss, in the

16 The Babylonian text of the inscriptions (DPg) briefly enumerates the lands that participated in the construction activities (Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 63; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 229-230). The Elamite text known as DPf was first translated by Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften des Achämeniden*, p. 83. Cameron’s English translation of the text has been published in Schmidt’s *Persepolis I*, p. 63. A new translation is given by Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 229, where he has used “palace” instead of the Elamite word for “fortress/citadel” (*hal-mar-raš*); it is also mentioned in one of the Persepolis Treasury tablets: “from within the fortress of Parsa” (Cameron, *PTT*, p. 86, where he discusses in full the meaning of the word; see also, Hinz and Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch*, p. 603). There is no indication whatsoever that Darius or Xerxes called the entire platform a palace.

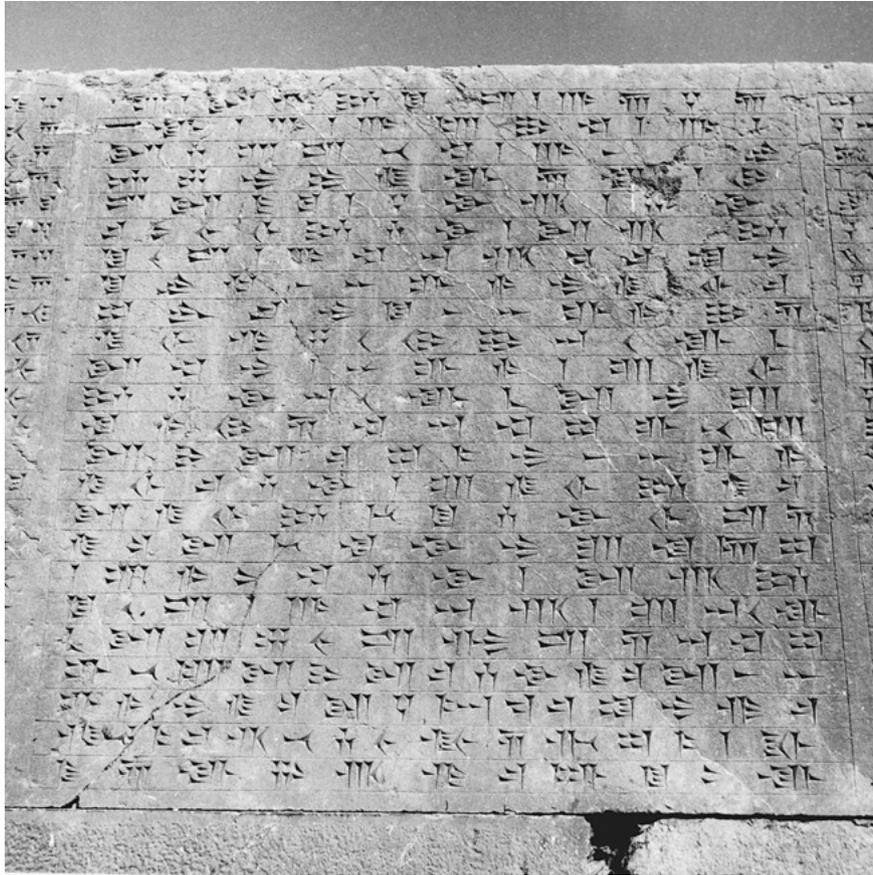


FIG. 1.5 The Foundation inscription on the south wall of the Terrace (Photo: A. Hakemi).

beginning the architects of Darius planned an east-west oriented Treasury, a private palace for the king (Palace of Darius), and a large columned hall- an Apadana. The initial Apadana had a 24-columned central hall, two 8-columned porticoes on the north and south and two 12-columned porticoes on the east and west sides. This schema changed later with the expansion of the Apadana, the construction of the Gate of All Lands and the grand staircase by Xerxes.¹⁷

The royal architects consolidated the blocks by means of two ingenious techniques. The first was the so-called *anathyrosis* technique, in which masons smoothed only the outer

edges of the stone blocks, leaving the centre of each face rough; when the two blocks came into contact, the inner, rough surface areas held the pieces firmly together, and the outer, smoothed surfaces provided a clean join. The second was to prevent blocks from shifting. For this reason, metallic joints of different shapes (often called dove-tailed clamps) were used. These clamps usually made of iron and in some cases of bronze were set in rectangular holes in the stone and fixed in place with lead.¹⁸ The shape and size of these clamps have provided significant evidence for the chronology of the monuments at Pasargadae and Persepolis.¹⁹

17 Kleiss, "Zur Planung von Persepolis", *Variatio Delectat. Iran und der Westen*, pp. 359-361, and figs. 4 and 7.

18 Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 76.

19 Nylander, "Clamps and chronology", *IA 6*, pp. 130-146; *Ionians in Pasargadae*, pp. 42-45.

THE CONSTRUCTIONS ON THE TERRACE

The citadel is ascended by means of a monumental stairway built by Darius' son and successor, Xerxes (486-465 B.C.). Set into an enormous recess of the north-west wall, the structure was a large double-reversing stairway. The steps are broad enough for ten men to pass abreast, and they had a gentle slope of 111 steps, with 63 steps to each landing and another 48 steps to the Terrace. At the foot of the south wall near Darius' inscriptions there was the original entrance to the Terrace (probably a stairway), which gave access to the Treasury and to the garrison building just east of the Treasury. When the monumental dou-

ble-reversing stairway was built at the north-west part of the platform, this southern entrance was closed off with large blocks of stone. At the top of the stairway, visitors passed through the monumental Gate of All Lands.

The Gate of All Lands consists of a four-pillared hall that is square in plan (24.75 × 24.75 m). The western side of the gateway was decorated with four-winged bulls, whose forequarters project out from the masonry; the opposite side of the gate is formed by colossal human-headed figures. The stone jambs of this gateway now also bear inscriptions with the names and dates of travellers who visited Persepolis between 1638 (the visit of Johan Albrecht Mandelslo) and 1962 (with the name



FIG. 1.6 The inscription of Xerxes on the Gate of All Lands in which he names the site as Parsa (Photo: A. Hakemi).

of a certain Victor Wall).²⁰ Inscribed on the wall above the bulls is a cuneiform inscription in three languages (fig. 1.6): Elamite, Old Persian, and Babylonian, in which Xerxes mentions the construction of the city:²¹

Says Xerxes the king: By the favour of Ahuramazda, this Gate of All Lands I built. Much other good construction was built within this city of Parsa (Persepolis), which I built and which my father built.

Whatever good construction is seen, all that by the favour of Ahuramazda we built.

There is a huge block of stone measuring 5.68 × 4.85 × 2 m in the open area to the south-east of the Gate of All Lands, within which is hewn a cavity. The function of such a block has been variously interpreted as being a small pond with a foundation connected to the subterranean water channels, or a water tank containing purified water used in certain rituals for purifying royal guests in their way to the Apadana.²²

The Apadana, the great audience hall of the Achaemenid kings, and the most impressive building of the site, is located to the south-east of the Gate of All Lands.²³ Built on a raised platform 2.5 m high, the Apadana consists of a large square central hall measuring 60 m on each side with six rows of six columns more than 18 m high, and three porticos. The bases of the richly decorated columns were adorned with plant designs and the shafts have as many as forty-eight flutes. The magnificent capitals of this palace were composed of palm-leaf designs capped by either double-headed bulls or double-headed lions (in the case of the east portico). The three porticos, each with twelve columns, are on the north, west, and

east sides; the southern side of the building has a series of storage and guard rooms. The western portico stands 14 m above the level of the plain, and its roof was once supported by twelve columns reaching a height of 19 m. The roof with its crenellations was more than 37 m higher than the level of the plain, something that would have caused a remarkable impression. The construction of the Apadana was planned and started by Darius as has been proved by the discovery of two pairs of tablets, in gold and silver, bearing an identical text in three languages:²⁴

Darius the great king, king of kings, king of countries, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian. Says Darius the king: This is the kingdom which I hold, from the Scythians who are beyond Sogdiana, thence unto Ethiopia; from Sind, thence unto Sardis – which Ahuramazda the greatest of the gods bestowed upon me. Me may Ahuramazda protect and my royal house.

By virtue of its plan, the Apadana of Persepolis is very similar to the Apadana of Susa even though the difference in time between the two buildings is considerable. The large columned hall at Susa was the work of Darius, while the construction of the Apadana at Persepolis is largely the work of Xerxes. The Apadana had four massive towers in mud-brick at its corners. Each tower had four stories and a height of 22 m. The surface of the towers, especially near the roof, was decorated with glazed bricks of floral and motifs. An inscription engraved on glazed bricks was placed in the middle of the decorated surface, of which a complete set of the Old Persian version was found by Herzfeld during his excavation in the area

20 For a full list, see Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>.

21 Lines 11-17 of XPa. See Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 148; Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 13; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 251; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 67-69.

22 For various interpretations, see Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 17.

23 The word *apadana*, which means "palace" or "storehouse", refers to a distinctive type of large hypostyle hall (Schmitt and Stronach, "Apadana", *EnlIr*, vol. 2, pp. 145-146). In the 1920s, in his first exploration of the ruins of Persepolis, Herzfeld named the palatial buildings on the Terrace: the Apadana, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, the Tripylon, and the Harem. Of all these buildings only two private palaces of Darius (known as Tachara in DPa, XPc) and of Xerxes (known as Hadish in XPd, XPj) bear inscriptions that include the original name of the building. The names of the buildings are conjectural.

24 Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 136-137; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 99; Schmitt, *CII*, 63-6, pls. 32-33. The same text has been duplicated on a gold and a silver plate allegedly found in Hamadan.

to the north-east of the Apadana. The inscription (1.37 × 1.14 m), placed on glazed bricks, informs us that the palace was founded by Darius and completed by his son, Xerxes.²⁵

Delegations from all over the Persian empire were probably received by the king in the Apadana, the stairways of which are decorated with relief carvings showing Persian guards and dignitaries and representatives of the empire's vassal lands bringing gifts or tribute to the Achaemenid king; the gifts include silver and gold vessels, jewellery, woven fabric, weapons and animals. It should be remembered that these reliefs were all painted.²⁶ The staircases underwent modifications and changes in the Achaemenid period, and the original panels were removed from the staircases and replaced by the present panels that display a procession of guards. Schmidt, who found the reliefs in the Treasury, discusses the circumstances of their discovery in full.²⁷ Tilia's examination of the central panels of the staircases of the Apadana showed that the audience scenes found in the Treasury had been originally belonged to the Apadana.²⁸ A number of scholars have since speculated on the reason behind the removal of the audience scenes.²⁹ The scenes carved on the walls of the stairways in the Apadana indicate that the palace served as an audience hall where the king greeted important visitors, who were no doubt impressed by this majestic structure that rose 23 m above the platform and some 40 m above the surrounding plain.

Running east from the Gate of All Lands was a passageway to another monumental gateway, which was never finished. The Unfinished Gate was intended to be a larger copy of the Gate of All Lands in front of the northern portico of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.³⁰ The remains consist of unfinished guardian monsters facing the forecourt with part of a plain column shaft standing on a column base. The measurements of this base indicate that the columns of the Unfinished Gate had been intended to be as high as the columns of the Apadana.³¹ The Unfinished Gate is a remarkable workshop for restorers where different phases of the working of the stone and the carving of reliefs can be studied.³² This gateway leads to an esplanade, on the east side of which there is a thirty-two columned hall. Sami who uncovered the area located on the east side of the Hall of a Hundred Columns writes that the buildings were probably used as stables for chariots and horses.³³ To the south of this esplanade, there is a large portico that had two rows of eight columns. The portico is flanked by walls decorated with figures of colossal bulls. According to Schmidt, the objects found in the excavation "must have been lost or discarded in this area when the contents of the main hall and its subsidiary rooms were carried to the front of the building during the looting of the site".³⁴ Eight stone doorways (two on each of the hall's four sides) lead into the main room; the doorways on the north and south are deco-

25 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 70-73, p. 98, fig. 42/c; Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, pp. 25-26, fig. 12. The text known as XPg has been published in both the aforementioned publications and Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 150; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 86-87, pls. 41-42.

26 Traces of paint have been recorded since Texier's visit in 1844.

27 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 167-168.

28 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, pp. 205-205, who also writes in detail about the dating and interpretation of the audience scenes in their original position.

29 A long discussion is presented by Margaret Cool Root (Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, pp. 91-96). Shahbazi proposes another interpretation of the reliefs, and dates the removal of the reliefs to the reign of Artaxerxes I (Shahbazi, "The Persepolis 'Treasury reliefs' once more", *AMI* 9, pp. 151-156).

30 Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 74.

31 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 130.

32 Tilia, "A study on the methods of working and restoring stone and on the parts left unfinished in Achaemenian architecture and sculpture", *EW* 18/1-2, p. 90.

33 Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 43.

34 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 131. He adds that the categories of finds are closely related to objects uncovered in the Treasury.

rated with reliefs of throne scenes, while those on the east and west are adorned with reliefs depicting the king fighting mythological creatures. Shahbazi identifies the enthroned king depicted on the jambs of the northern doorways as Artaxerxes I receiving in audience a “Median” chiliarch.³⁵ He adds that since Artaxerxes I was a youth when he ascended the throne, no crown prince is shown here. Below the throne are five superimposed rows of soldiers, each composed of two confronting files of five “Median” and “Persian” guards, totaling one hundred soldiers. They may symbolize one hundred columns.³⁶

The enormous main hall was a square 70 m on each side, with ten rows of ten columns to support the building’s roof. The building does not bear any inscription on its walls or entrances, but Herzfeld discovered a Babylonian inscription of Artaxerxes I, in the debris of the south-eastern corner of the main hall. The inscription (A1Pb) engraved on a slab (35 × 35 × 7.5 cm) states that Xerxes began the construction and that his son and successor, Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.), completed it.³⁷ The function of this gigantic hall is uncertain. Schmidt who completed the excavation of the building called it the “Throne Hall”. He writes that the building was a “palace museum”, erected for the storage and exhibition of the greatest royal treasures.³⁸ Based on the reliefs on the doorjambs of this building, showing the throne carried out by royal guards, Godard states that the palace was “lieu de reunion de l’armée” reserved for the reception of military officials and the famous Immortals.³⁹ He continues as follows: “Incidentally it was in this edifice built for the army by Xerxes I, the Achaemenid most hated by the Greeks, because he had destroyed the tem-

ples of Athens by fire, that the fire which destroyed Persepolis seems to have started and developed with most violence”.⁴⁰

The south-eastern part of the platform was covered with a large building known as the Treasury which served as a royal storehouse. The Treasury is a rectangular building (120 × 60 m), with a single entrance in the middle of the western wall facing the mountain. The building was entirely in mud-brick; the outer surface of its walls was embellished with an arrangement of alternating piers and recesses, and it was probably covered with a white plaster.⁴¹ The Treasury has four large columned halls, a series of narrow rooms and corridors, and two courtyards. The Treasury was probably one of the earliest buildings on the Terrace. The initial Treasury was a building with an east-west orientation, which was soon proved too small to shelter royal treasures. It was consequently enlarged to almost twice its original size. The last phase of the construction took place during the construction of the so-called Harem of Xerxes, when the architects had to raze the western part of the enlarged Treasury in order to make room for the erection of the main wing of the Harem.⁴² In the Treasury was kept the booty of conquered nations and the annual tribute paid to the king by Persian and vassal peoples. Before the Hall of a Hundred Columns was finished, the Treasury was probably used as a reception chamber as well. The finds of the Treasury are scant as a result of the plundering of the site by the Macedonians. The finds consist of reliefs, fragments of sculpture and applied ornaments, vessels of stone, small statues, bronze weapons and tools, seals, cylinder-seals and seal impressions, inscribed objects such as beads, architectural elements, and

35 Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 68, where he writes that the “enthroned king wears not a plain cylindrical crown tapering towards the top, but a tall cylindrical hat with a horizontal band shown in relief decorating its top”.

36 Shahbazi, “Persepolis”, *EncIr*, online edition.

37 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 126/A-D, and 129; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 265.

38 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 42 and 129-130.

39 Godard, “Les travaux de Persépolis”, *Archéologia Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, p. 126.

40 Godard, *The Art of Iran*, p. 115.

41 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 158.

42 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 200, and figs. 66-67.

tablets.⁴³ The Treasury was also used as an administrative centre that includes record rooms. The excavation of room 33 revealed 656 clay tablets and fragments of such, most of which were massed in the centre of the room. Room 34 contained 14 tablets and fragments; 35 tablets were discovered in Hall 38. The meticulous examination of the conditions in which these tablets were found provided enough ground for Schmidt to deduce that the tablets were located originally “at points considerably above the floor level. They could have been kept in shelves, and labels may have been attached to goods piled high”. He further adds that there may even have been “a second story above this part of the Treasury”.⁴⁴ The tablets vary in size but they measure approximately 106 × 71 × 28 mm. The accidental firing of the tablets during the conflagration baked the clay tablets and preserved them. Cameron, who studied and published the Treasury tablets, writes that the clay tablets were equipped with strings for attaching them to a sealing which encircled the duplicate of the text in Aramaic on a parchment or a papyrus roll.⁴⁵

Two similar large stone reliefs found in the courtyard 17 figure among the most notable discoveries of the Oriental Institute excavations. The relief depicts the Achaemenid king seated on his throne; a dignitary stands before the king with his hand raised to his mouth in a gesture of respect; the crown prince stands behind the king, at the head of a number of

court officials. Schmidt believed that the scene represented Darius and his son and heir, Xerxes, and the reliefs could be dated to the late years of the reign of Darius, between 490 and 486 B.C.⁴⁶ To Ghirshman it seems strange that a work representing such an important iconographic theme should have been placed in a location where only a few officials could see it. He concludes that the original Treasury, going back to the reign of Darius, was a “temporary throne room”.⁴⁷ Krefter rejects Ghirshman’s assumption, indicating that the reliefs were not there at the time of Darius.⁴⁸ This was later developed by Gerd Gropp who based on Ghirshman’s idea, writes that the original building of the Treasury resembled a courtyard with surrounding rooms very much like a caravanserai. Gropp thinks that the building served as the king’s residence.⁴⁹ During the 1960s, the meticulous observations and studies of Giuseppe and Ann Britt Tilia showed that these reliefs had been removed from the main staircases of the Apadana.⁵⁰ Shahbazi, based on Tilia’s work at the Apadana, argues that the enthroned figure represented on the scene is probably Xerxes, and the crown prince standing behind him is his eldest son named Darius, who was murdered together with his father and did not reign.⁵¹ The reliefs were later removed to be conserved in the Treasury during the reign of Artaxerxes I.⁵² The date of the removal of the reliefs as well as the political circumstances and im-

43 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, pp. 20ff; all the finds have been fully published in *Persepolis II*.

44 Schmidt, *Persepolis II*, p. 5.

45 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 28. See also Vallat, “Deux tablettes élamites de l’Université de Fribourg”, *JNES* 53/4, pp. 263-264.

46 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, pp. 32-33. The better preserved panel of the Treasury reliefs was transferred to the Iran Bastan Museum in 1938.

47 Ghirshman, *The Arts of Ancient Iran*, pp. 206-207.

48 Krefter, “New outlooks on Persepolis”, *The Memorial Volume of the VIth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, p. 209.

49 Gropp, “Beobachtungen in Persepolis”, *AMI* 4, p. 30, and fig. 1. Gropp’s theory was criticized by Krefter, “Persepolis: A propos. Beiträge zur Funktionsbestimmung”, *AMI* 6, pp. 156-157, where he refutes Gropp’s identification of the early Treasury as a private residence.

50 For the discovery of the reliefs, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 162-69. The Tilias’ findings are published in Tilia, *Studies and Restorations II*, pp. 175-208.

51 Bruno Jacobs agrees with Schmidt’s identification of the enthroned king as Darius I and of the standing figure as Xerxes (Jacobs, “Ein Planänderung an den Apadana-Treppen und ihre Konsequenzen für die Datierung der Planungs- und Bauungsphasen von Persepolis”, *AMI* 29, pp. 295-296).

52 Shahbazi, “The Persepolis Treasury reliefs once more”, *AMI* 19, pp. 151-156.

plications of this major event in the history of Persepolis have been much discussed and remain controversial (see below).

The middle and southern parts of the Terrace are occupied by smaller complexes. Near the south-east corner of the Apadana lies the Tripylon (also called the Central Palace or the Council Hall). A double stairway decorated with reliefs of Persian and Median dignitaries provides access to a portico that opens into a square central hall. Two other entrances to this hall are located on the south and east sides. I adopt here Herzfeld's naming which seems appropriate given the situation of the building, and because it fits better the Iranian tradition of organization of space. It is a "palace-gate". Besides its entrance and exit, it has a third door from which a staircase leads down to a lower level towards the Harem. Despite a number of small passages elsewhere all regular traffic between *birun* (outside or public quarters) and *andarun* (inside or private quarters) had to pass through this Tripylon that is an intermediary building between the public and private areas of the citadel, i.e. between the great audience halls in the north and the royal and administrative buildings in the south.⁵³

To the west and south-west of the Tripylon are the Tachara (Palace of Darius) and the Hadish (Palace of Xerxes). The Tachara was built on a platform 3 m high and has a 12-columned central hall. Trilingual inscriptions found in the structure name Darius I as the builder of the palace. The two stone piers flanking the southern portico of the palace bear the name of Xerxes, who completed his father's construction. This palace is also

called the Hall of Mirrors (Tālār-e Āyneh) because of its use of glossy, polished black stone, especially inside niches and windows.⁵⁴ Leading down from the central hall are two stairways decorated with relief carvings showing servants carrying food in covered dishes, the king about to depart the palace with his entourage, and the king in combat with monsters. The southern stairway was completed by Xerxes; the western stairway, bearing an inscription of Artaxerxes III, was added more than one hundred years later. Javad Zakataly's examination of the staircase in the late 1940s showed that the present western staircase was a replacement of an earlier one going back to the reign of Darius.⁵⁵ The entire building had red-surfaced flooring as did other buildings on the Terrace.⁵⁶ Given its modest dimensions, the Tachara was well suited to be a king's residence on the Terrace. The narrow interstices between the stone doors and windows were filled with plastered mud-bricks. The superstructure consisted of a ceiling supported by wooden columns. Contrary to all other buildings, the Tachara is oriented to the south due to the climate that demanded living rooms looking south during the winter; it is why Herzfeld interprets the building as a *kushk* or winter palace.⁵⁷ The Tachara is also an epigraphic museum where a multitude of inscriptions, poems, names, and graffiti were engraved in the course of twenty-five centuries that have elapsed since the foundation of the city.⁵⁸ The significance of those inscriptions will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Hadish or Palace of Xerxes was about twice as large as Darius's palace. The building

53 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 230.

54 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis", *AMI* I, p. 28; Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 49.

55 Godard, "Persépolis. Le Tachara", *Syria* 28, p. 63, fig. 1.

56 The presence of such a flooring was first determined in one of Weld's soundings (Weld-Blundell, "Persepolis", *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists*, p. 557; Schmidt, *Persepolis* I, p. 222.

57 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 231.

58 Most of the inscriptions engraved on the walls of the Tachara have been studied by Mostafavi in his *The Land of Pārs*, pp. 216-231; and also Sami, "Yādbud-e didār-e pādashāhan az Tachar, kākh-e Dāriyush-e bozorg dar Takht-e Jamshid", *HM* 13/148, pp. 2-12.

occupies the highest area on the Terrace. It was built on a platform of bedrock (large denuded patches of which are still visible at some spots) at the edge of a deep step, providing a splendid view over the landscape to the south. Two monumental stone stairways lead up from courtyards on the east and west to the palace. The palace's main hall had thirty-six wooden columns; relief carvings on the eastern and western doorways depict the king's servants with ibexes. Trilingual inscriptions mentioning Xerxes have been found on doorjambs, on doorway frames and on the garments of the king in colourful relief carvings.⁵⁹ The palace was constructed of very fine stone, and it was largely destroyed in the fire set by Alexander's army.

Both Old Persian names of *tachara* and *hadish* are used in the two buildings. The Palace of Xerxes was called *tachara* as well as *hadish*. The Palace of Darius is called *tachara* in his inscriptions and *hadish* in those left by Xerxes.⁶⁰ The term *tachara* is used only on the column tori of the Palace of Xerxes. The term figures only in the main hall of the Palace of Darius. It might be possible that *tachara* was used for interiors or columned halls while *hadish*, being a general term, applied to the whole building. For Ghirshman the Tachara and the Hadish were not private residences, and served as banquet halls.⁶¹ Godard writes that the Tachara of Darius, due to its small dimensions, "was certainly only intended to house the Achaemenid sovereign, Darius or another, temporarily in case of invasion or rebellion". He believes that the "true royal palaces, vast and sumptuous, together with gardens, were on the level of the plain in the south and south-west part of the royal town".⁶² Krefter partially supports the idea by

assigning the function of banquet halls to the "palaces" named 'G', 'D', and the Hadish.⁶³ In a recent interpretation, Shahrokh Razmjou, following James Fennelly's idea (see below), attempts to ascribe a religious significance to the buildings. Razmjou claims to have identified a "sacrificial room" on the north-west corner of the Tachara.⁶⁴

In the south-west corner of the Terrace there are a number of enigmatic architectural modifications that deserve more attention. To begin with the least known, one should indicate the confused remnants of a building known as Palace 'D' which is located in an intermediate level between the Palace of Xerxes and the Harem. Schmidt found fragments of tori and stone windows that belonged to the Palace of Xerxes, and he writes that the hillock was piled up after the destruction of the site.⁶⁵ For Sami the structure looked like a storage house with rooms separated by "barrel roofs of sun-dried bricks from the store-rooms underneath".⁶⁶

The area to the west of the Palace of Darius and south of the Palace of Xerxes has been named Palace 'G'. It is a mound of bedrock and rubble, rising above the level of the courtyard. The area was explored first by Stolze who found in the north-western corner of the mound a drainage canal built of re-used stone blocks. Meticulous observations have shown that the area underwent major changes possibly during Achaemenid times, and that there existed structures which were later re-used in what is called Palace 'H'.⁶⁷ Sami who excavated the area in 1950 found some building foundations in mud-brick, a line of underground water-channels, and a coin of the Sasanian king Ardashir (r. 224-241). This indicates that the locality of Palace 'G' was

59 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 238.

60 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 238-239.

61 Ghirshman, *The Arts of Ancient Iran*, p. 193.

62 Godard, *The Art of Iran*, p. 111.

63 Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, plan 36, numbers 15, 16, 17.

64 Razmjou, "Persepolis: a reinterpretation of the palaces and their function", *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, pp. 233-243, fig. 20.15.

65 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 269.

66 Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 58.

67 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 274.

occupied after the fall of the Achaemenids.⁶⁸ This is consistent with inscriptions and graffiti at the nearby Harem. According to Herzfeld, a temple existed at this location, but Krefter reconstructs the building as a 30-columned hall with a southern portico, and calls it the “Banquettsaal der Völker”.⁶⁹ Schmidt, rejecting the idea of a temple, believes that the few vestiges of this building are “remnants of Artaxerxes III’s dismantled residence”. In regard to this area, Curzon writes that Ker Porter “sanguinely located here the banqueting hall where Alexander feasted, and which ‘fell a sacrifice to the drunken revelry of the Macedonian’”.⁷⁰

The south-western corner of the Terrace is occupied by what has been known as Palace ‘H’, which consists of a flat mound of rubble buttressed on its north side by a mutilated sculptured façade. Today’s remains preserve the plan of a columned hall of sixteen columns, another room with four columns, and three chambers. There is a staircase giving access to the building near the south-western corner. The northern front of the building is decorated with a sculptured stairway with inscriptions that name Artaxerxes III. Flandin who examined the area in 1850 was the first to observe that the remains were of a later date.⁷¹ Careful exploration of the site by Schmidt and Tilia has shown that the decorated façade with its sculptures and inscrip-

tions had been removed from the southern side of the central hill (Palace ‘G’).⁷² The principal part of this building front is from a sculptured stairway that once decorated a palace repaired and presumably inhabited by Artaxerxes III. This is known from inscribed panels in Old Persian, which name that ruler.⁷³ At the western end of this façade and aligned with it, there are fragments with reliefs of tribute bearers which had been removed from another building. The remains include an inscription in Babylonian that names Artaxerxes I.⁷⁴ The two sections of the façade are separated by the southern end of a wall, which once closed the courtyard to the west. To judge from the masonry the blocks of this wall had been taken from the Palace of Darius.⁷⁵ A number of dressed and decorated blocks were found during the cleaning work in the area of Palace ‘H’ and at the foot of the south-western corner of the Terrace.⁷⁶ These blocks belong to a parapet on the edge of the Terrace. These battlements with alternatively smaller and larger crenellations are crowned with a pair of bull horns. The Tiliias restored and replaced them on the edge of Palace ‘H’, where they can be seen today. The interpretation of this parapet has since been a matter of scholarly debate. It is hard to believe that they had any defensive use in presence of a number of functional defensive structures on and below the platform.⁷⁷ The south-western area of the Ter-

68 Sami, *Persepolis*, pp. 53-54. Bassiri, who wrote his guide of Persepolis before the publication of Schmidt’s report, calls the area “the central hill which might have been used as a worshipping place due to its high elevation on the Terrace” (Bassiri, *Rāhnamāy-e Takht-e Jamshid*, p. 43).

69 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 230. Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, pp. 71-73, plan 36, number 17.

70 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 43; Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, p. 175. After a careful reading of Ker Porter’s account, I tend to believe that by the “banqueting hall” he means the Apadana.

71 Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. 2, p. 184.

72 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 279-282, pls. 200-205; Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, pp. 243-316, including a full documentation of the area.

73 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 279, where he also notices that in the inscription Artaxerxes III does not claim to have built a palace. The inscription (A3Pa) is in Old Persian only, with four copies; a,c,d are on the north wall of Palace ‘H’; b is placed on the western staircase of the Palace of Darius (Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 114 and 156; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 275; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 114-118).

74 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 280. This is the Babylonian version known as A1Pb (Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 265).

75 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, p. 256.

76 Tilia, “Reconstruction of the parapet on the Terrace wall at Persepolis, south and west of Palace H”, *EW 19/1-2*, pp. 9-43.

77 Mousavi, “Parsa, a stronghold for Darius: a preliminary study on the defensive system of Persepolis”, *EW 42/2-4*, 1992, pp.

race was extensively re-used, which shows the importance of this particular part of the Terrace during the centuries that followed the fall of the Achaemenids.

The last of the structures on the Terrace, located just west of the Treasury, is an extensive L-shaped building initially called the Southeast Palace or the Harem of Xerxes. Herzfeld who called this building a *harem* thought the structure once housed the many wives and concubines of the king; the identification is solely based on the plan of the building and because of its relatively hidden and protected location.⁷⁸ There is no Achaemenid source mentioning the function of the structure as such, however, and nothing in the building's architectural remains would support this conclusion. The palatial part of the Harem consists of a columned hall and a portico that opens towards a courtyard to the north. The western extension, located on a level below the Palace of Xerxes, formed by a series of small columned rooms; this part was in communication with the Palace of Xerxes by means of two staircases. Leo Trümpelmann proposed that these small rooms or apartments were guest rooms to accommodate the delegations of the empire. In fact, there are twenty-three (not twenty-two as Trümpelmann counts) rooms which may have had some connection with the twenty-three delegations depicted on the staircases of the Apadana.⁷⁹ The theory seems more compelling than the identification of the rooms as the apartments for the king's concubines. Herzfeld and Krefter reconstructed and modified the main wing of the building in 1931 for the double purpose of providing a house for the expedition and an example of the original architec-

ture as it looked in its day. The excavation showed that the building had two phases of construction. The first phase dates to the reign of Darius, and was never finished. It was later levelled to the pavement by Xerxes, who erected the present building.⁸⁰ In the southwestern corner of the main wing of the building, Herzfeld discovered an important foundation tablet in stone bearing an inscription of Xerxes (XPf) in Old Persian, in which he speaks of his ancestors and his accession to the throne:⁸¹

When rebuilding the southwest corner of that palace, Mr. Krefter, the architect of the expedition, thought it necessary not to use the remains of the ancient wall but to renew the corner from its foundation. Hence the old sun-dried bricks, preserved to a height of about 1 meter, were taken away. Below appeared the usual deposit of small stones and rubble with which the Achaemenian architects leveled the uneven surface of the rock terrace. And directly under the lowest course of bricks, among those small stones, there was lying, on a bedding of small pieces of crystalline sulphur and remains probably of some fragrant wood, a block of calcareous stone measuring about 52 × 58 cm. and from 6 to 11 cm. thick, shaped like a Babylonian clay tablet and wholly inscribed with 48 lines of Old Persian cuneiform.

A street 320 m long and 7.5-10 m wide separates the buildings on the Terrace from the eastern fortification, and the two royal tombs on the slope of Kuh-e Rahmat. Herzfeld was the first to pay attention to a chain of well defined hillocks on the summit of the mountain and the eastern edge of the Terrace.⁸²

A plusieurs endroits, surtout à l'angle Sud-Ouest de la ville, pas loin du tombeau inachevé, on distingue bien les murailles d'enceinte. Elle consiste en une muraille intérieure, fondée sur une couche de pierres pas dressées, en un fossé, et en une seconde muraille extérieure en rempart.

78 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 236; Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 255; Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 56.

79 Trümpelmann, "Zu den Gebäuden von Persepolis und ihrer Funktion", *Kunst, Kulture und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben*, p. 236.

80 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 236; Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 255.

81 Herzfeld, *A New Inscription of Xerxes from Persepolis*, p. 1; Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 255; Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 56, where he gives the translation of the inscription; Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 112 and 149; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 254-255; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 81-85. The inscription was probably trilingual, of which the Elamite version was never found. Four Old Persian copies and one Babylonian copy were found later in the Garrison quarters (Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 209 and fig. 87; *Persepolis II*, p. 51).

82 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis", *AMI* 1, p. 32, and fig. 44.

Later, Schmidt excavated one of the seven hillocks along the eastern edge of the Terrace at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat. The excavation showed that the hillock was formed by the debris of a roughly square mud-brick tower (approximately 19 × 18 m).⁸³ A dry moat separated the eastern fortifications from the foot of the mountain. On the western side of the tower there were a series of barracks which the excavator calls the Garrison quarters. In Room 16 of the Garrison quarters filled with masses of mud-bricks and rubble which had fallen from the adjacent tower, Schmidt found a group of seven foundation slabs of stone bearing inscriptions of Xerxes. These royal records, originally housed in the Treasury, were re-used later for making a bench in Room 16. An eighth slab was found in two pieces in Room 5.⁸⁴ Three of these inscriptions are copies of the Harem text (XPf), and five others are known as Xerxes' Daiva inscription.⁸⁵ The philological, religious, and historical aspects of the text are debated.⁸⁶

The north-east corner of the Terrace is occupied by a large defensive tower connecting the eastern fortification line to the mud-brick wall on the northern edge of the Terrace. In evacuating the excavation dumps in 1932

Herzfeld accidentally cut through the mud-brick tower and discovered the Fortification tablets. The tower had two storeys. According to the excavator, the upper storey was for guards, while the tablets were walled up in a small room below.⁸⁷

About 30 metres above the eastern fortifications on the slope of Kuh-e Rahmat, there is a cistern, 4.15 m square, which was used as a reservoir for the storage of water provided by the winter rains. Schmidt excavated its vertical shaft to a depth of about 24 meters without reaching its bottom which is considerably below the base of the Terrace foundation.⁸⁸ Sami thought that the inhabitants of the city had thrown their precious belongings into the cistern before the arrival of the Macedonians. Tadjvidi had also plans to excavate the cistern in order to reach its bottom.

Two royal tombs are located on the slope of Kuh-e Rahmat. The southern tomb has been identified as the Tomb of Artaxerxes II, and the northern tomb as the Tomb of Artaxerxes III. Sami excavated the area in front of the tombs. In the south tomb area, he found fragments of a decorated door in stone which initially blocked the tomb chamber with a sliding latch, and a bronze trumpet used for funeral

83 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 206, and fig. 85, A, C.

84 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 209, and fig. 87, D, E.

85 Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 150-152; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 254-258; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 88-95. Two other versions of XPh were found in inconspicuous contexts: one in the Post-Achaemenid remains at Tall-e Takht in Pasargadae (Stronach, *Pasargadae*, p. 152, pl. 161), and the other used as a torii in Building 'B' outside the Terrace (see below). Another copy in Old Persian was found in the southern part of the Harem in 1951 (Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 59).

86 Herzfeld published the first interpretation of the text soon after its discovery ("Xerxes Verbot des Daiva-Cultes", *AMI* 8, pp. 56-77). This was followed by Kent's article ("The Daiva-inscription of Xerxes", *Language* 13, pp. 292-305). For a reassessment of the text and its various interpretations, see Herrenschildt and Kellens, "Daiva", *EnclIr*, and Briant, *HPE*, pp. 550-553. Ghirshman suggested that the temple at Nush-i Jan was the very same Daivadana temple which Xerxes ordered to make inaccessible by filling it up with stones (Ghirshman, *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Néchandeh et Masjid-i Soleiman*, pp. 174-175; Lukonin and Dandamaev, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*, p. 67). This has been refuted by Stronach and Roaf (*Nush-i Jan I. Major Buildings of the Median Period*, p. 213). K. Abdi, following Herzfeld's assumption, suggests that Xerxes' decree became obsolete during the reign of Artaxerxes II (404-359 B.C.); consequently the copies were deposited in the context in which they were found (Abdi, "The 'Daivā' inscription revisited", *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 6/1-2, p. 72.). One can hardly imagine that Artaxerxes II would have placed his great predecessor's important inscription in such a disrespectful location; the slabs could have been deposited in the Treasury.

87 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 226.

88 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 210-212. Sami mentions similar cisterns found north of Persepolis (*Persepolis*, p. 76).

ceremonies.⁸⁹ The area in front of the third incomplete tomb located at the southernmost extremity of Kuh-e Rahmat was perhaps meant for the last Achaemenid king, Darius III.⁹⁰

THE CONSTRUCTIONS OUTSIDE THE TERRACE

There are a number of royal structures in the Southern plain outside the Terrace (fig. 1.7). The existence of such structures has been known since the seventeenth century, and travellers mentioned and sometimes drew sketches of fragments of columns and architectural elements scattered in that area (see chapter III). The plan of the constructions in the Southern plain was probably conceived at the same time as the preparation of the Terrace of Persepolis. The same process of levelling had to be carried out in this area. The architects levelled the slope of the mountain in order to build a series of raised flat grounds of different heights upon which were constructed royal residences and buildings.⁹¹ The layout of the city is equally similar to the one observed on the citadel: the public area is in the north, the private sector is located in the south. Eight buildings have so far been excavated in the Southern plain. These buildings bearing no inscription that can give their name have been labelled with letters 'A' to 'E' according to Tadjvidi's nomenclature (fig. 1.8).

The northernmost building in the Southern plain has been named 'E' (Edifice 'E'), which is the largest and most sumptuous of all, cov-

ering 324 square metres. It consists of a four-columned central hall with three two-columned porticos (fig. 1.9, pl. 3). Contrary to the other buildings in the plain, the columns are entirely in stone capped with addosed lion capitals. One of the columns of its main hall was still standing in the early nineteenth century.⁹² Herzfeld mentioned the building and the whole area to the south of the Terrace in his 1929 report.⁹³ Sami excavated the edifice in the season 1955-56 (fig. 1.10).⁹⁴ Tadjvidi explored its perimeter during his excavations. He reports that the building sits on layers of rubble, broken bricks, gravel and stones which served to fill the depression and to set the foundation of the building in the Southern plain. In one of the soundings, he found a quantity of painted sherds.⁹⁵ The presence of painted sherds in the sounding motivated K. Abdi and M. T. Atai to open a small trench to the south of Edifice 'E' in the hope of finding earlier occupation levels.⁹⁶ In fact, any attempt to find traces of an earlier occupation in the Southern plain would be misleading. Persepolis is an *ex nihilo* foundation, and the entire surface of the Southern plain adjacent to the Terrace underwent massive levelling and changes under Darius and Xerxes. The royal builders filled the large depression created by the runoff of waters from the mountain with whatever they could, including gravel, debris of stone and potsherds collected in the vicinity. The presence of a handful of painted sherds (Kaftari red ware of the late 3rd millennium B.C.) is out of context and does not indicate, in this case, the existence of an earlier occupation in the area.⁹⁷ The building is on a

89 Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 85-86.

90 Schmidt, *Persepolis III*, pp. 99-107; the recent identification is based on Calmeyer, *Die Reliefs der Graber V und VI in Persepolis*.

91 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 74-77, figs. 30-33; Mousavi, "La ville de Parsa: quelques remarques sur la topographie et le système défensif de Persépolis", *IA* 36, p. 150

92 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. I, p. 680 (see below, chapter VII).

93 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis", *AMI* 1, p. 32, figs. 51-55.

94 Sami published only a few lines on his excavation (*Persepolis*, p. 91).

95 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 65-69.

96 Abdi and Ata'i, "Gamānehzani dar barzan-e jonubi, Takht-e Jamshid", *MBT* 39-40, pp. 32-41.

97 A recent study of the building was undertaken by Kimia Nasirzadeh in her MA thesis, the results of which remain unpublished (Nasirzadeh, *Moarefiy-e banay-I mansub be kahkh-darvazeh dar barzan-e jonubiy-e Takht-e Jamshid*, MA thesis, Azad University, Tehran, 2005, unpublished).

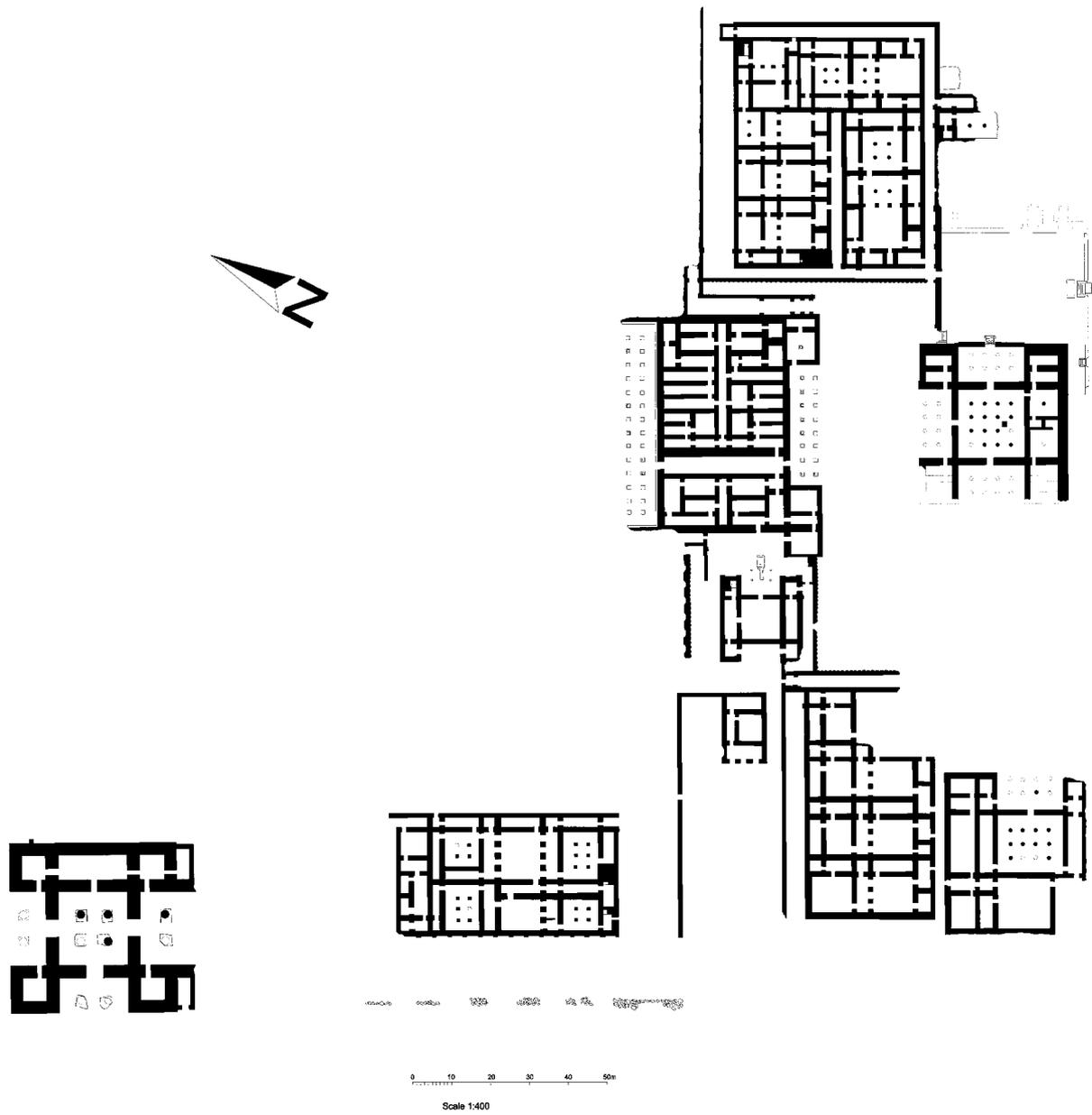


FIG. 1.8 Plan of the excavated architectural complexes south of the Terrace redrawn by M. T. Atai based on Tadjvidi's plan (after Atai with modifications).

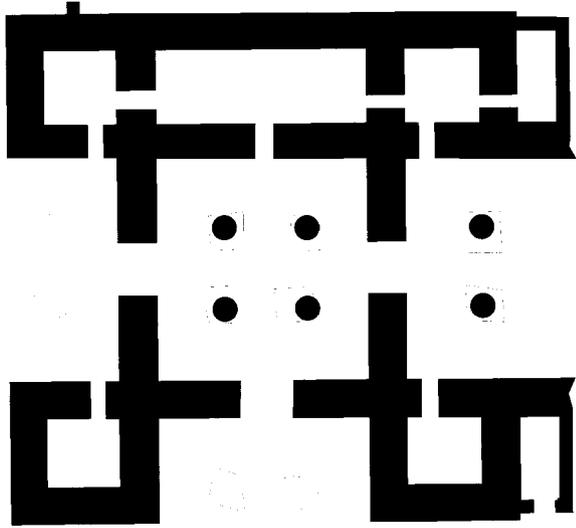


FIG. 1.9 Plan of Edifice 'E' redrawn by M. T. Atai based on Tadjvidi's plan (after Atai).

raised ground separated from the rest of the buildings in the plain, and it is even possible that the building had its own enclosure.⁹⁸ Edifice 'E' may well have served as a small, provisional audience hall during the construction of the great Apadana on the Terrace (pl. 4).

The remains of a columned hall uncovered in the southernmost part of the Southern plain have been known as Edifice 'C' (fig. 1.11). This is undoubtedly a palatial building with a relatively large central hall (20 × 20 m) with sixteen columns, and three eight-columned porticoes. By means of a small staircase flanked by animal statues, it opens onto a yard or garden situated on its east side on a lower level. Herzfeld partly excavated this building in 1932 without giving a report (fig. 1.12). A plan was later drawn and pub-



FIG. 1.10 Excavation of Edifice 'E', 1955 (after Sami).

98 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 67-68, figs. 24-25, and p. 74, note 5; Mousavi, "La ville de Parsa: quelques remarques sur la topographie et le système défensif de Persépolis", *IA* 34, p. 150.

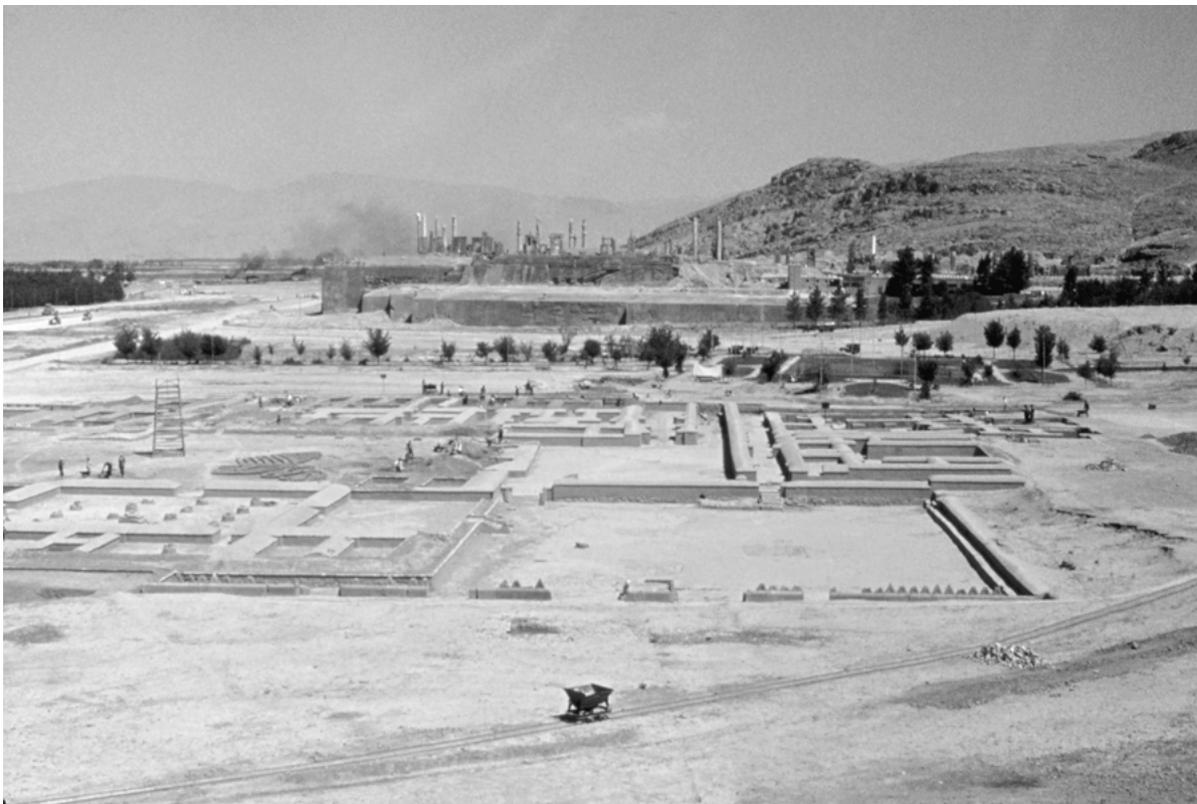


FIG. 1.11 Columned Hall 'C' and its garden from the south; Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



FIG. 1.12 Columned Hall 'C' uncovered by Herzfeld in the southern plain. From Mostafavi's album of Persepolis dated November 1933 (Photo © the Iran Bastan Museum).

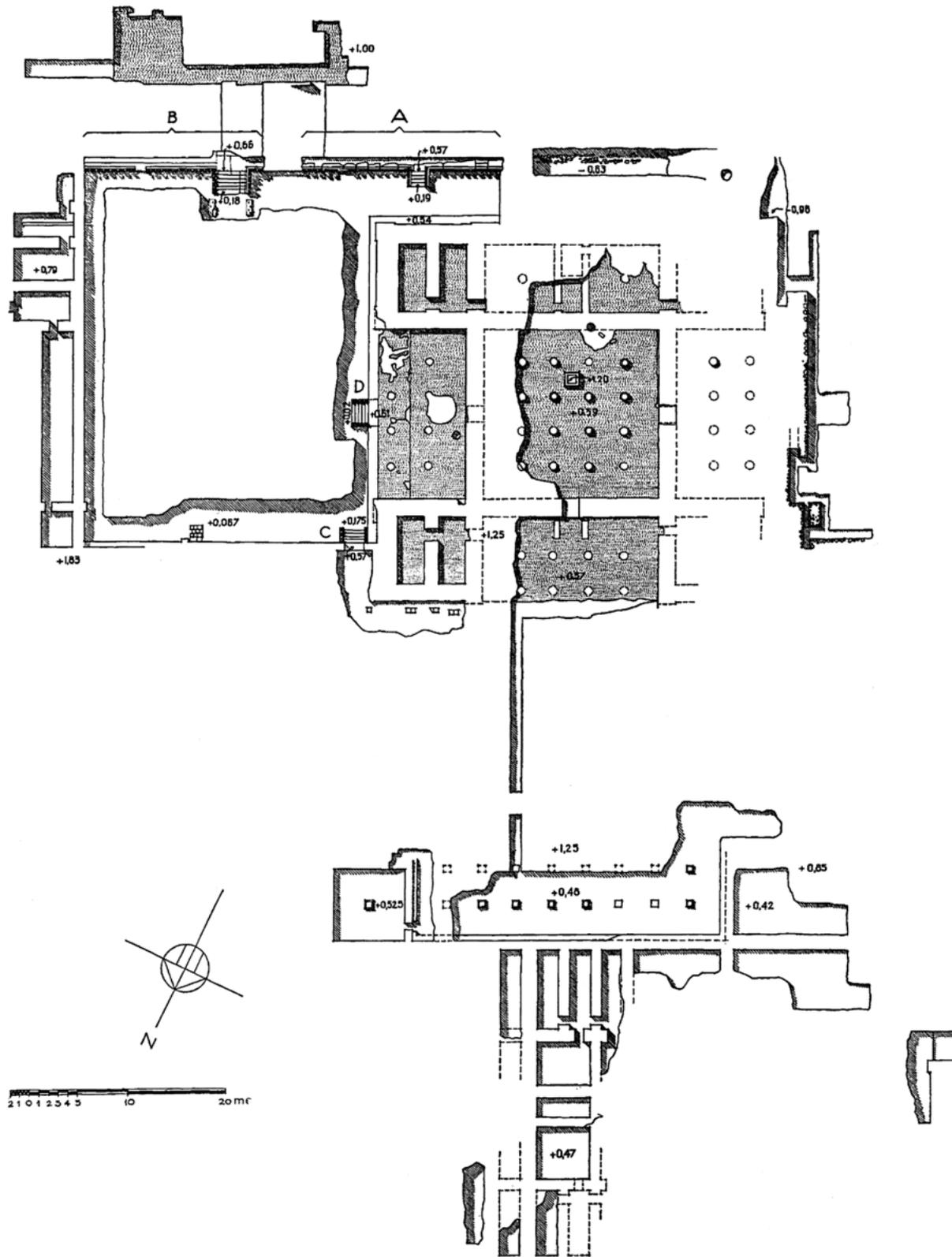


FIG. 1.13 Plan of Columned Hall 'C' published in Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, fig. 14, p. 48.



FIG. 1.14 The excavation of the garden adjacent to Columned Hall 'C'; Tadjvidi's excavations, Feb. 20, 1969 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

lished from his photographs and notes by Schmidt (fig. 1.13).⁹⁹ The complex was subsequently explored and mapped by Tadjvidi in the 1970s (figs. 1.14 and 1.15, pl. 5). The columned hall is of apadana type; its floor is covered with a red coat, and to the south there are a number of rooms. Four corner towers, much the same as in the great Apadana, corner the three porticos and the rooms located on the south side. There is a square stone (1.50 m) in the median north-south axis of the main hall. This is most probably the base of a throne and not a fire altar as Herzfeld suggested.¹⁰⁰

The next architectural complex situated to the north-east of Edifice 'C' is the building named 'H' excavated in the early 1970s by Tadjvidi.¹⁰¹ This is the largest building (70 × 50 m) and also the best preserved complex in the southern sector of the Southern plain. The complex has six units. There is a relatively wide alley running parallel to the northern side of the building; the three other sides had vaulted corridors. Another narrow corridor separates the northern and southern sectors of the complex. The northern sector has six small units while there are two large columned rooms in the southern sector. A

⁹⁹ Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 231. A similar base is known in the Apadana at Susa, upon which was placed the royal throne.

¹⁰¹ Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 140-176.

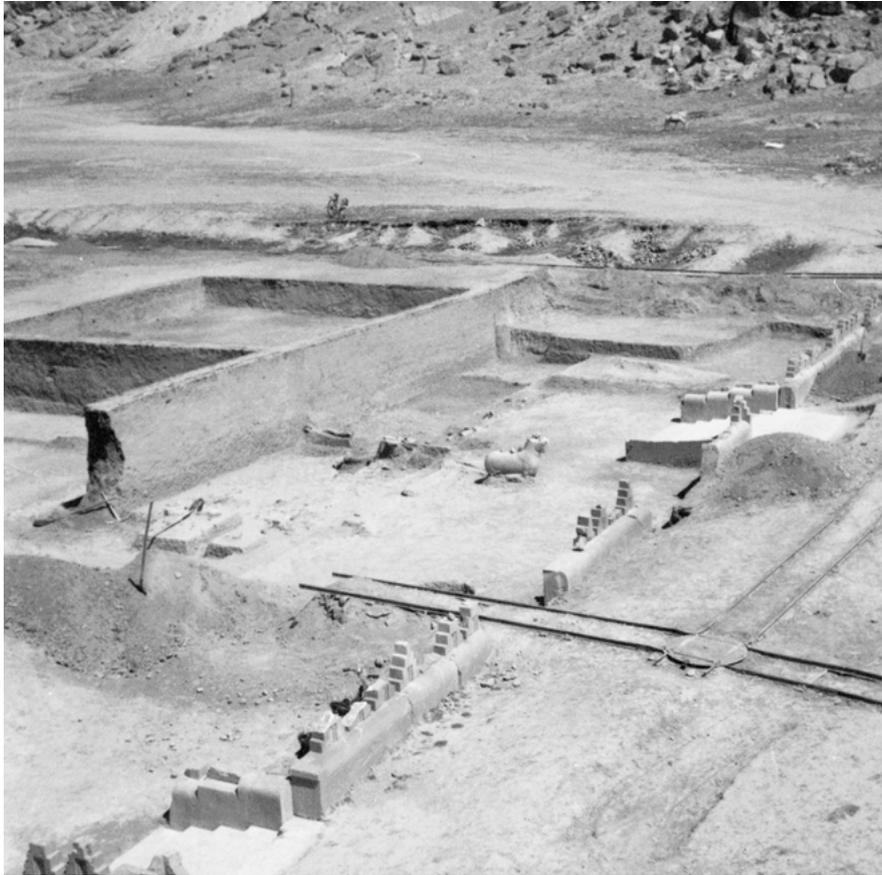


FIG. 1.15 The garden to the north of Columned Hall 'C'; Tadjvidi's excavations, April 24, 1969 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

door in the south-western corner closed the access to the garden of Edifice 'C'. Two rectangular depressions in the bedrock found in that spot show the locations of the iron door sockets. A number of terracotta conduits and channels were found in the southern sector of the building 'H', which may have provided water for the garden of Edifice 'C' (fig. 1.16). The excavation of the entire complex revealed a number of interesting finds and architectural features, of which the most important is a four-columned hall located in the southern sector (pl. 6). During the excavation of this

hall and its adjacent two-columned room traces of burnt beams and column shafts were uncovered, revealing the extent of the conflagration at the time of the capture and destruction of the city by Alexander (fig. 1.17, pls. 7-8).¹⁰² Forty complete or fragmentary inscribed column tori were also found in various places of this building (fig. 1.18). The trilingual inscription around the tori reads: *Says Xerxes the King, I built this tachara*.¹⁰³ The floor of these rooms was paved with square baked bricks. The excavators uncovered a bath adjacent to the four-columned hall with a

102 In absence of the C14 analysis of the remains, the dating of the burned beams and column shafts can be questioned. It is, however, certain that there is no secondary use of the building and all the finds can be assuredly dated to the Achaemenid period.

103 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 157-158, note 7, figs, 102-103. The inscription is known as XPI (Stève, "Inscriptions des Achéménides à Suse (fin)", *StIr* 4/2, pp. 20-21; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 259-261).



FIG. 1.16 Building 'H'. Terracotta pipes. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

small basin (fig. 1.19).¹⁰⁴ Two silver coins were found close to the eastern wall of the building, and according to the excavator they may have been accidentally dropped. The first coin represents the head of a man, and may have belonged to one of the western satrapies of the empire; the second coin, which Tadjvidi identifies as Achaemenid, shows a representation of a lion attacking a bull; this might also be from western regions of the empire.¹⁰⁵ Considering its proximity to the palatial Edifice 'C', Building 'H' was a full functional building designed to serve the daily use of the king and his entourage. The southern sector,

with its features and single, guarded entrance at its south-western corner, is perfectly appropriate for being the king's private residence.

Building 'A' located to the north of Columned Hall 'C' represents a rectangular plan that is exceptionally close to the plan of the palaces at Pasargadae. The building is oriented east-west, and has two elongated, columned porticoes on its northern and southern sides (figs. 1.20 and 1.21). The core of the building is formed by a series of small rooms and silos. The excavation of Building 'A' has yielded very few finds, a fact that makes any guess on the function of the building difficult. The finds are a large number of sherds, two glazed terracotta cones each in the form of a lotus, a few trilobate arrowheads, and an Islamic coin. Tadjvidi also reports that the thickness of the debris covering building 'A' was less considerable than other architectural complexes, and that the building may have been reoccupied in later times.¹⁰⁶ Whereas the two open areas to the north and south of the building may have been used for some sort of public gathering, the access to the interior of the building was limited. It is possible to think of an administrative centre in communication with the residence of Building 'H' and Columned Hall 'C'.

Outside the southern side of Building 'H' there are steps that lead to a square pavilion named 'D' (fig. 1.22). The plan is of apadana type but without any columns. The question of how the central space might have been roofed is problematic. To cover this large space (10 × 10 m) was impossible without having resort to columns. Farther to the south, there are more structures that belong to Pavilion 'D'. The outer walls of the complex, facing north and south, are decorated with slightly protruding *redans*. There is a long water channel running parallel to the eastern wall of Pavilion 'D'.¹⁰⁷

Buildings 'G' and 'F' are closely related to each other. In fact, the layout of these two

104 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 173-174.

105 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 146, figs. 94 and 95.

106 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 97.

107 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 79-81, figs. 35-37.



FIG. 1.18 Building 'H'. Inscribed torus with the name of Xerxes. Tadjivi's excavations (Photo: M. Mousavi).



FIG. 1.19 Building 'H'. Bathroom. Tadjivi's excavations (Photo: M. Mousavi).



FIG. 1.20 Building 'A' from the east. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



FIG. 1.21 Building 'A' from the east. Restoration of mud-brick walls. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1970-71 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

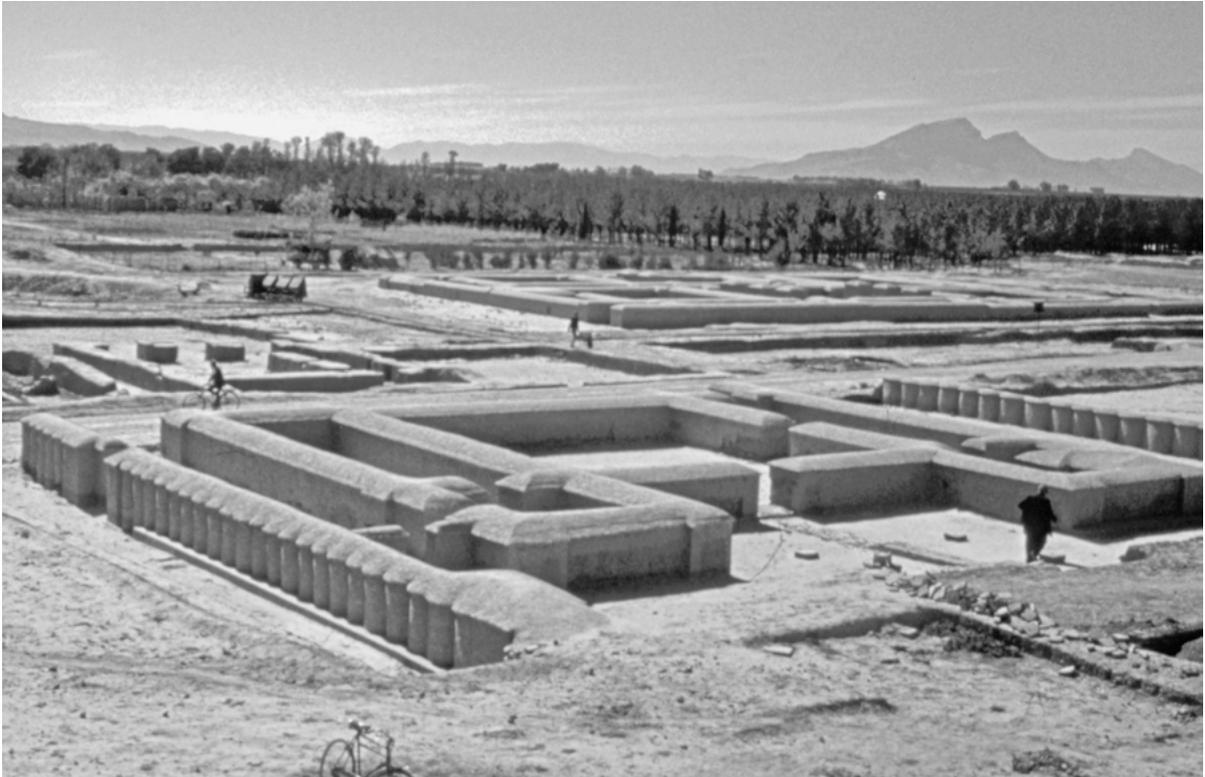


FIG. 1.22 Building 'D' from the north-east. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

constructions is similar to that observed in Columned Hall 'C' and building 'H', which implies that they were conceived according to a standardized design.¹⁰⁸ Building 'G', oriented east-west, consists of a series of rooms of different sizes, equipped with water conduits. The building is in communication with Columned Hall 'F' which was excavated by Sami in 1952 (fig. 1.23).¹⁰⁹ The building consisted of a 12-columned hall surrounded on three sides by narrow rooms. The main access to the building is from the north side (fig. 1.24). The discovery of inscribed column bases (fig. 1.25) shows that the building was constructed under Xerxes who names himself as

being simply King, and not King of Kings, an expression he would have used had he already succeeded his father. According to Godard, this is an indication that Darius was still alive when the building in question was under construction.¹¹⁰ Fragments of coloured plaster in red, blue, and white were found during the excavation of this columned hall, and according to Sami, the floor of the hall was covered with a red plaster similar to the one used in the Harem.¹¹¹ There is a square stone pool (23.55 m) in the proximity of Columned Hall 'F', with a depth of 2 m. Sami found traces of water conduits close to the pool which was certainly a water reservoir for the area.¹¹²

108 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 138.

109 Sami, "Kāvoshhāy-e davāzdah sāley-e Bongāh-e Elmiy-e Takht-e Jamshid", *GB* 2, pp. 53-54;

110 Godard, "The newly found palace of Prince Xerxes at Persepolis and sculptures which the architects rejected", *ILN*, 2 January 1954, p. 17. The inscription is labeled XPm (Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 103 and 261)

111 Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 90.

112 Sami, *Persepolis*, pp. 90-91. Sami also explored traces of stone tanks and conduits north of Persepolis, near the village of Khafrak, which were used to bring water to the royal city (*Persepolis*, p. 76). Traces of stone canals have been found along the foothills of the mountain, between Naqsh-e Rajab and Persepolis (Kleiss, "Beobachtungen in der Umgebung von Persepolis und Naqš-i Rustam", *AMI* 9, pp. 136-137, pl. 38.1).



FIG. 1.23 Columned Hall 'F'. Sami's excavations, 1952 (Photo © Marie-Thérèse Ullens de Schooten, Museum of Fine Arts Library, Harvard).

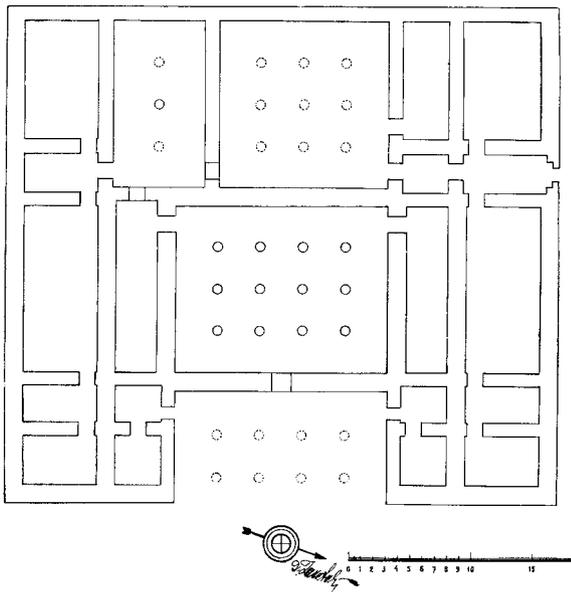


FIG. 1.24 Plan of Columned Hall 'F' drawn by J. Zakatali (after Sami).

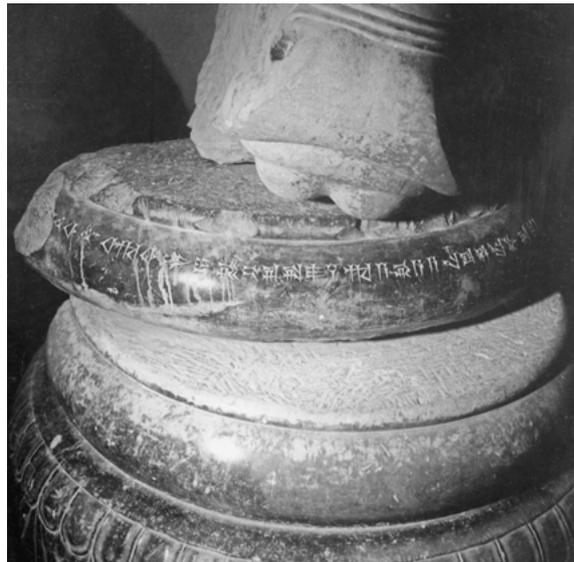


FIG. 1.25 Inscribed torus from Columned Hall 'F' excavated by Sami (Photo: A. Hakemi).



FIG. 1.26 Building 'B' from the north. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971–72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

Building 'B' (fig. 1.26) is the last construction so far excavated in the Southern plain. It is located to the south of Edifice 'E', and has a north-south orientation. It consists of four columned halls with a series of corridors and rooms, including a courtyard. The building is equipped with water conduits and baked brick pavements. A number of poorly preserved Greek and Seleucid coins were found in the excavations, which indicates that the building was re-used in later times.¹¹³ It is also surprising to notice that one of the Achaemenid builders used an inscription of Xerxes (probably a Babylonian copy of XPf) as a torus for one of the column bases (fig. 1.27).¹¹⁴ Other

finds include seal impressions, stone vessels, and few personal ornaments in bronze.

The citadel was protected by a series of fortifications built on top of Kuh-e Rahmat. Owing to the nature of the terrain, parts of these fortifications were erected along the eastern slope of the Mount, and include twenty-five crenellated towers (figs. 1.28, 1.29, and pl. 9). In order to build the towers, the architects had to level the slope of the Mount, at points cutting away the rock and at others filling the depressions with rubble. The corridors were interconnected by vaulted doors; the outer surface of the walls was plastered.¹¹⁵ Tadjvidi excavated three towers and their structures

113 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanibāy-e novin*, pp. 111-112, figs. 53-58; Stève, "Inscriptions des Achéménides à Suse (fin)", *StIr* 4/2, pp. 21-25, figs. 14-15, pl. V.

114 The tori was made by cutting and shaping an inscribed slab similar to the inscriptions found in the Garrison Quarters. Tadjvidi, *Dānestanibāy-e novin*, pp. 108-109, fig. 52; Stève, "Inscriptions des Achéménides à Suse (fin)", *StIr* 4/2, p. 21.

115 Mousavi, "Parsa, a stronghold for Darius", *EW* 42/2-4, pp. 223-224.



FIG. 1.27 Building 'B'. Inscribed torus made of one of Xerxes' Daiva inscriptions (after Tadjivi).

between 1968 and 1973. The excavations showed that most of the entrances and arrow-slots had been blocked before the capture of the city in 330 B.C., implying that by that time the fortifications had lost the military function for which they were designed.¹¹⁶

PROBLEMS OF CHRONOLOGY

The first important body of data comes from the contemporary texts found *in situ*. A number of the buildings on the Terrace bear inscriptions with the name of the king during whose reign the building in question was erected or completed; not one of these inscrip-

tions provides an exact date. The first significant document is what has become known as the "Foundation inscription" (DPd, DPe, DPf and DPg) placed on the south wall of the platform, of which the Elamite version reveals that Darius began building the citadel at the south wall, which in later years became a somewhat inconspicuous location isolated from the other buildings. Why do these inscriptions, contrary to the normal procedure, have different texts? One explanation would be that the royal scribes first engraved the inscription in Elamite, and that only later did they add the Old Persian and Babylonian versions. If we accept that the Old Persian inscription was introduced in the reign of Darius, we would expect

¹¹⁶ Tadjivi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 206.

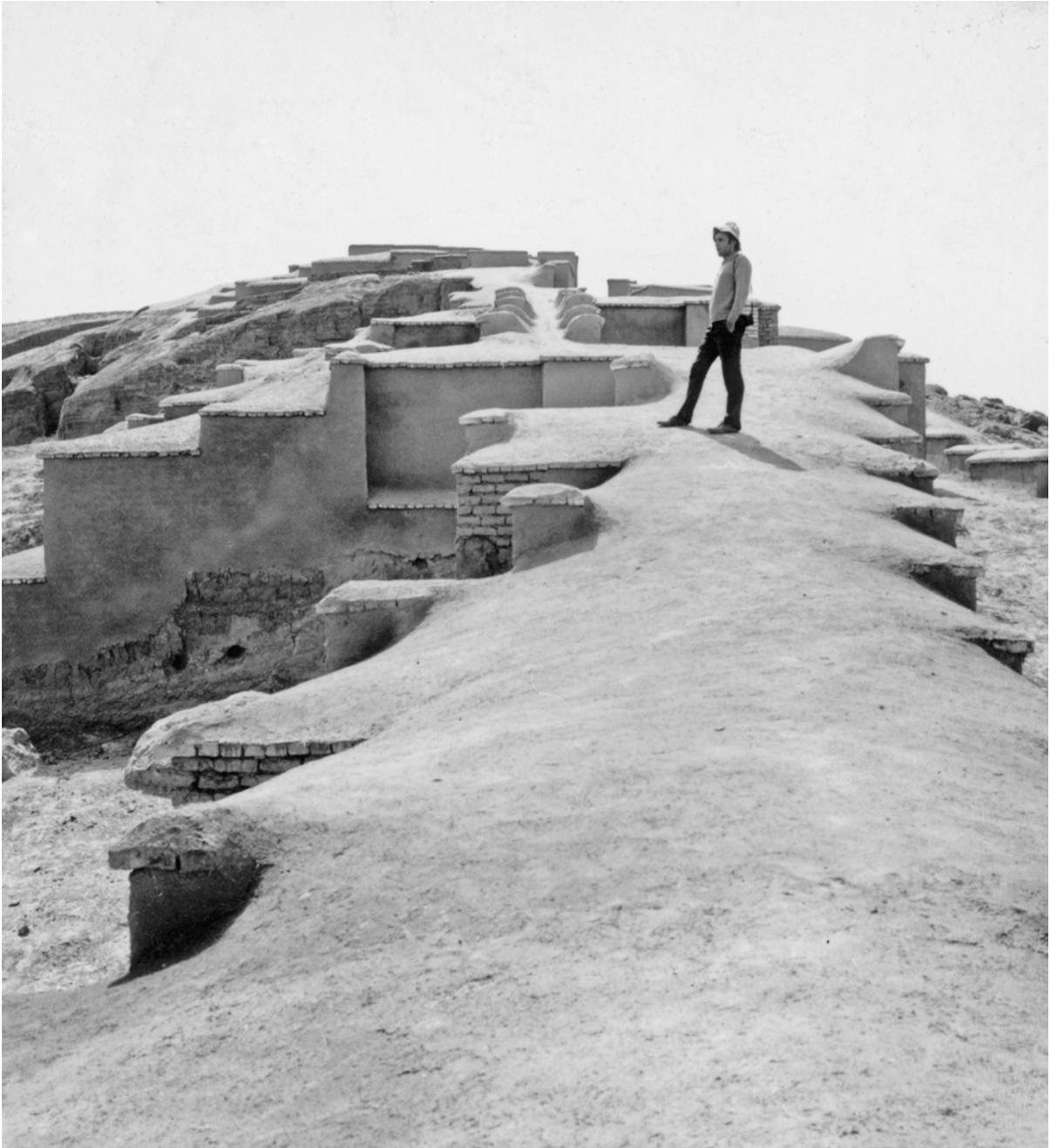


FIG. 1.28 General view of the excavated fortifications on the summit of Kuh-e Rahmat. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1970-71 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

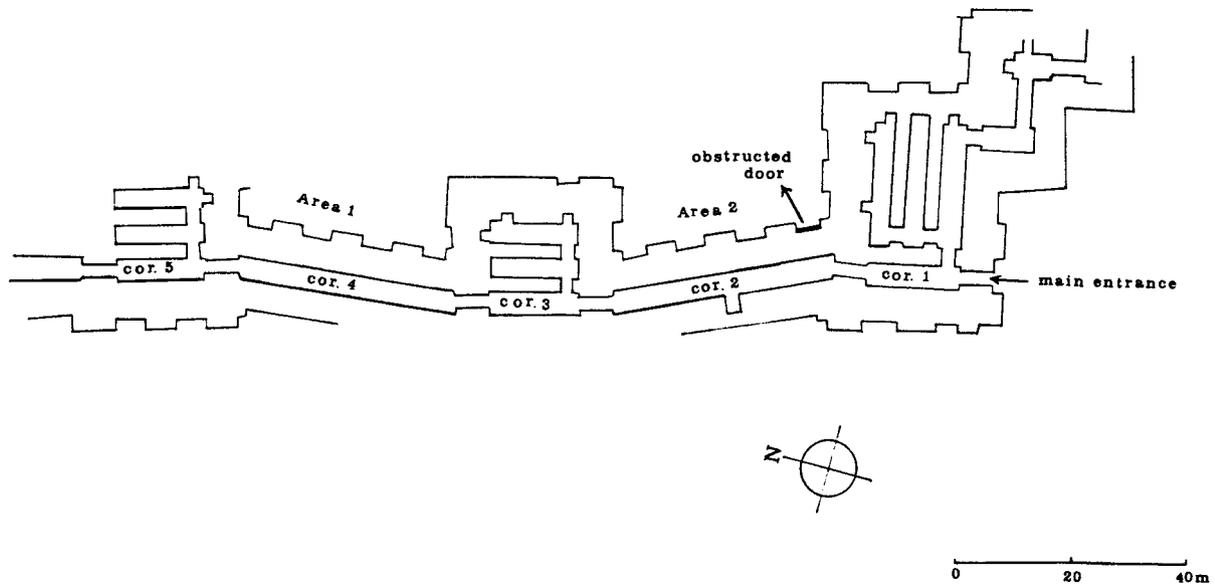


FIG. 1.29 Plan of the excavated area by Tadjvidi (redrawn after Tadjvidi's plan).

to have a clue to the date of the Foundation inscription.¹¹⁷ The Old Persian text of the inscription includes the Sakas, whose leader was defeated in the summer of 519. The text also enumerates Egypt re-conquered by Darius between 519 and 518. Finally, the Indus, which became a satrapy before 513, figures on the list of the empire's nations given in the text.¹¹⁸ The invasion of Thrace took place around 511 B.C. This is a region rich in precious metals. The wealth obtained as booty and tribute from these conquests enabled the new king to launch large-scale construction activities at both Susa and Persepolis. The Foundation inscriptions may have been placed between 511 and 507 B.C. just after the European campaign.¹¹⁹ Hallock, however, points out that the dates of these events are uncertain and the omission of a particular people is not conclusive evidence; he concludes that the inscrip-

tions were probably written between 515 and 505 B.C.¹²⁰ Be that as it may, the Foundation inscriptions attest that the erection of the platform or the citadel of Persepolis had been completed by the end of the sixth century B.C.

In 1933, Krefter discovered what came to be called the Foundation tablets of Persepolis. Embedded in the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of the walls of the Apadana's main hall, these tablets had been carefully placed in stone boxes. Each box contained two plaques, one of gold and one of silver and each plaque bore an identical trilingual inscription (DPh). Four gold and two silver coins were also found beneath the boxes that contained the plaques. The inscription is one of the first to be composed at the site, and is among the earliest Achaemenid cuneiform inscriptions of Bisutun and those allegedly found in Hamadan.¹²¹ The Foundation plaques of the Apada-

117 Controversies and debate over the date of the invention of the Old Persian script have been going on for decades. For a thorough description of the problem see, Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 81-82 and 85-86; also the extremely thoughtful article by F. Vallat: "Darius, le Grand roi", *Le Palais de Darius à Suse*, Paris, 2010, pp. 50-71.

118 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 39

119 Cameron, "Darius, Egypt, and the 'Lands Beyond the Sea'", *JNES* 2/4, pp. 312-313.

120 Hallock, *PFT*, p. 150. See also Shahbazi's discussion in which he argues against Cameron's dating: "Darius in Scythia and Scythians in Persepolis", *AMI* 15, pp. 232-235. The date of 513 B.C. has been accepted by Briant who gives an overview of the campaign and its achievements: Briant, *HPE*, pp. 156-157.

121 The text is identical to DH found fortuitously sometime in the early 1920s. Herzfeld published the tablets in 1926 ("Eine neue Darius-Inschrift aus Hamadan", *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 42, pp. 2105-2108). In a recent

na have stimulated varying interpretations. Two datings have so far been proposed for the Foundation tablets: the first is based on the text of the inscriptions, referring to a date prior to the European expedition (between 513 and 511). The second argues in favour of a lower date, after 500, because of the dates assigned to the coins found in the deposits.

The text of the plaques describes the realm of Darius as stretching “from the Scythians, who are beyond Sogdiana, from there to Ethiopia; from India, from there to Sardis”.¹²² Schmidt writes that since the text omits Darius’ European campaign the substructures of the building must have been completed prior to the date of the European campaign.¹²³ The construction of the Apadana at Persepolis began around 515, and the plaques were written between 513 and 511 (the date of Darius’ European campaign).¹²⁴

The two Cypriot coins found in the south-east deposit are problematic. The first coin is

from Paphos with the image of bull and ram’s head. Price and Wagoneer have suggested an early fifth century date, which has been accepted by Stronach and Calmeyer.¹²⁵ The second Cypriot coin is a silver stater (wounded giant and kneeling Herakles holding a bow) which was found during Schmidt’s re-examination of the pit in which the south-east deposit had been discovered. This coin differs from the others, and those who examined it at that time suggested a date later than 500 B.C.¹²⁶

The complication that such a dating has caused cannot be surmounted without examining two possibilities. First, the circumstances in which the coins were found are not very clear. Krefter and Mostafavi both report that there were a total of twelve coins found in the pits: eight gold and four silver. Schmidt reports that the latest Cypriote coin in the series was found later in the south-east deposit. He discounts the possibility of this coin being intrusive. Thus, according to Schmidt’s interpre-

article, Margaret Cool Root surprisingly proposes the following theory: the plaques known as DH had been clandestinely dug up or acquired at Persepolis by Herzfeld during his early survey of the site in 1923-24. Herzfeld then presented the tablets as being discovered in Hamadan. Root adds: “To my knowledge, these tablets have disappeared into the black hole of the antiquities market without a trace. Furthermore, to my knowledge no independent information has come to light verifying or disputing any of Herzfeld’s claims about the discovery or even the physical features and text contents of the tablets” (Root, “Palace to Temple—King to Cosmos: Achaemenid Foundation texts in Iran”, *From the Foundations to the Crenellations*, pp. 202-203). Aside from the fantasist nature of the argument, a number of objections can be made to her theory. The plaques found in 1926 in a locality named Sar Qaleh which was an old neighbourhood covering part of Tepe Hegmataneh in Hamadan (for a full bibliography, see Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 111-112). The plaques had been broken in pieces in order to be smuggled out of the country. Dr. Sa’id Khan Kurdistani, the celebrated scholar of the Kurdish language, sent a photograph of the gold plaque to the British Museum on behalf of the discoverer. The British Museum did not buy the plaques. The owner donated the silver plaque to the government in exchange of an export license for the gold tablet. With the efforts of Sa’id Khan Kurdistani and Herzfeld, the gold plaque was finally purchased by the Iran Bastan Museum in 1928 for 70,000 rials (approximately £ 1200). Both of the inscribed plaques are now in Tehran. The gold tablet came in 22 pieces; the silver tablet in 8 pieces (Verbal process of the commission in charge of acquiring the gold and silver tablets, Ministry of Public Instructions, 27-2 and 1-3-1306 H.S./ 18 and 21 May 1927, published in Yazdani, *Asnād-e Heyathāy-e Bāstānshenāsi dar Iran*, p. 187). The plaques (19 x 18.5 cm) are much smaller than the Foundation plaques (33 x 33 cm) of the Apadana at Persepolis (Mostafavi gives a full account of the discovery in his *Hegmatāneh*, pp. 82-86). Iranian archival documents corroborate Herzfeld’s account of the find spot. Moreover, no discovery of such an importance would have been kept secret, and it is out of question that Herzfeld could have managed to excavate in the ruins without being noticed.

122 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 70; Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 136-137; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 126; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 63-65.

123 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 40 and 70.

124 Shahbazi, “Darius in Scythia and Scythians in Persepolis”, *AMI* 15, p. 235.

125 Price and Waggoner, *Archaic Greek Coinage: The Asyut Hoard*, p. 16; Stronach, “The Apadana: a signature of the line of Darius I”, *De l’Indus aux Balkans*, p. 444; Calmeyer, “Das Datum der Gründunginschrift vom Apadana”, *REA* 41, p. 54.

126 The numismatists to whom Schmidt entrusted the study of this coin suggested a later date, but he insisted this coin should be prior to 515 (Schmidt, *Persepolis II*, pp. 110 and 114, No. 39).



FIG. 1.30 Apadana. Southern interior wall from the south discovered by Tilia (Photo © IsIAO).

tation, the south-east deposit is possibly later in date, but it is still a sixth century coin.¹²⁷

Based on the most recent numismatic examination of these coins, they may have consisted of a mixed group as one would expect to find circulating in the Persian empire in the last decade of the sixth century. The numismatic re-examination of the question suggests that even the Cypriot coin may have had a date prior to 500 BC.¹²⁸ Root, who interprets the text (DPh) from the Persepolis Apadana deposits as “ a geographically charged expres-

sion of the display of power between the imperial centre and the imperial periphery”, points out that the date of the Greek coins found in the deposits depends largely on the date of the inscription; she firmly thinks that the plaques were inscribed and buried before Darius’s invasion of the Thrace.¹²⁹

Thus, the numismatic studies on the date of the coins in the deposits tend to suggest a date prior to 500 BC. If we accept that the Cypriot coin is intrusive – which is quite possible – then the reason for its presence may have been

127 See his discussion in *Persepolis II*, p. 110.

128 Kagan, “An Archaic Greek coin hoard from the eastern Mediterranean and early Cypriot coinage”, *NC*, vol. 154, 1994, pp. 39-40; also Meadows, “The Apadana Foundation deposit (IGCH 1789): some clarification”, *NC*, vol. 163, 2003, p. 341.

129 Root, “The Persian Archer: aspects of chronology, style and symbolism”, p. 34; idem, “Evidence from Persepolis for the dating of Persian and Archaic Greek coinage”, *REA* 41, p. 11. See also P. Briant’s comments in the same volume (Remarques finales, pp. 324-325).



FIG. 1.31 Apadana. Southern interior wall from the north (Photo © IsIAO).

the alteration of this area of the palace in the early fifth century B.C.¹³⁰ The problem can be explained in light of Tilia's investigations that showed the southern part of the Apadana had at one time been significantly modified structurally. In the 1960s, the reliefs on the northern and eastern staircases of the Apadana were being continuously damaged by the humidity entering through the ground from behind. In 1967, restoration work began on the northern half of the landing above the inner flights of the eastern staircase of the Apadana. Tilia opened a trench behind the inner flight of the staircase, which led to the discovery of

a wall parallel to the relief-decorated façade of the staircase (figs. 1.30 and 1.31). The wall formed the socle of the Apadana. The foundation blocks of this wall were worked smooth on their upper sides but had been left unfinished. The internal wall and the staircase panels differ in their method of working the blocks, a fact that led Tilia to suggest that the wall in question belonged to an earlier period of construction.¹³¹ Such a discovery corroborates previous investigations in the area. Based on their location, their connected platforms, and the combined effect of their staircase façades, the Tripylon and the Apadana were ori-

130 See also Bruno Jacobs's thoughtful discussion on the date of the Apadana deposits, who dates the Foundation deposits to the reign of Darius, sometime after 512 (Jacobs, "Eine Planänderung an den Apadana-Treppen und ihre Konsequenzen für die Datierung der Planungs- und Bauungsphasen von Persepolis", *AMI* 29, pp. 287-289).

131 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations* I, pp. 151-154, fig. 27.

ginally part of the same project conceived during the reign of Darius.¹³² In the initial plan, the Apadana was smaller and had a central stairway with two converging flights on its side. In this way, the northern stairway of the Tripylon would have been placed more in the centre of the courtyard. The original plan was then revised. The eastern portico was enlarged by means of monumental stairway matching the northern stairway. Both Krefter and Tilia wrote that the change might have occurred at a very early stage, probably during Darius' reign.¹³³ The Apadana of Persepolis was not completed during Darius' lifetime. Xerxes' inscription on glazed bricks which decorated parts of the exterior walls of the Apadana states that he finished his father's work.¹³⁴ In contrast to Xerxes' assiduous recognition of his father's deeds, his stairway inscriptions (XPb) ignore the contribution of the founder, and in the Babylonian version he states "by the grace of Ahuramazda have I built this house".¹³⁵ The building was under construction during more than thirty years, and was finally completed by Xerxes.¹³⁶

The second set of textual evidence consists of two groups of administrative documents

found at Persepolis. The first group, named the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, was found by Herzfeld during the excavation of the north-eastern tower of the fortifications in 1933 (pl. 10).¹³⁷ The find consisted of some 30,000 tablets, whole or fragmentary, of which 2,120 texts have been edited and translated by Richard T. Hallock;¹³⁸ 154 others kept in Tehran have been recently published by Abdolmajid Arfaee.¹³⁹ The research on the Fortification tablets continues with the efforts undertaken by Matthew Stolper and his team in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and a number of publications have been devoted to the study and interpretation of these tablets and their seal impressions, of which one should mention the volume edited by Pierre Briant, Wouter Henkelman and Matthew Stolper.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Henkelman gives a long introduction to the Persepolis Fortification archive, with annotated translations of some of the Fortification texts in his doctoral dissertation.¹⁴¹ Art historical studies on the seal impressions are published by Mark Garrison and Margaret Cool Root.¹⁴² The second series, the Persepolis Treasury Tablets, was found between 1936 and 1939 by Schmidt in

132 Schmidt *Persepolis I*, p. 40.

133 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, pp. 164-165 and the discussion in note 5; Krefter writes that the change must have taken place around 512 BC (Krefter, "Persepolis im Model", *AMI* 2, pp. 136-137).

134 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 71.

135 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 40 and 82, note 92; Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 252.

136 Tilia, "Recent discoveries made during the restoration work at Persepolis", *The Memorial Volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, p. 367.

137 Roaf presents a good overview of the tablets ("Persepolis", *RA* 10/5-6, pp. 408-410). A full reassessment of the present state of knowledge on the Persepolis administrative texts is available on the internet (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persepolis_Administrative_Archives; <http://persepolistablets.blogspot.com/>); this includes up-to-date information on the outrageous lawsuit in the United States Federal Court system against the Persepolis Fortification Tablets on loan at the Oriental Institute. For the find spots of the tablets, see Razmjou, "Find spots and find circumstances of documents excavated at Persepolis", *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis*, p. 52.

138 Hallock, *PFT*; "Selected Fortification texts", *DAFI* 8, pp. 109-136.

139 Arfaee, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets: Fort. and Teh. texts*. In 1951, part of the collection was returned to Iran.

140 Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper, *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis*.

141 Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts*, Leiden, 2008.

142 Garrison and Root, *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, I: Images of Heroic Encounter*, Chicago, 2001. See also, Hallock, "The use of the seals on the Persepolis Fortification tablet", *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 127-133; Vallat, "L'utilisation des sceaux-cylindres dans l'archivage des lettres de Persépolis", *Sceaux d'Orient et leur emploi, Res Orientalis* 10, pp. 171-174.

several rooms in the Treasury. They were studied and published by George Cameron.¹⁴³

These documents are accounting records concerning payments to construction workers, but, like other Achaemenid inscriptions, the texts do not refer to specific buildings and their construction. None of the Fortification tablets, from the reign of Darius, refer to construction. But they do indicate the presence of administrative offices and the royal court at Persepolis. The Fortification tablets were written at many sites in the regions between Persepolis and Susa.¹⁴⁴ From these tablets, we learn that work proceeded at the site from 512 to 458 B.C., with a heightening of activity between 503 and 497 B.C. The earliest Elamite Fortification tablet was written in the first month of the thirteenth year of the reign of Darius I (April 509); the latest is dated to the twelfth month of the twenty-eight year of his reign (March/April 493).¹⁴⁵ The Elamite Treasury texts (the Persepolis Treasury Tablets) are dated between the thirtieth year of Darius' reign and the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes I (492-457), with the largest number of dated texts from years 19 and 20 of Xerxes. These records show that a few buildings at Persepolis had been erected by 509 B.C. According to Hallock, of 1,713 texts dated by year, almost one-half are dated in the 22nd and 23rd years of the reign of Darius,

and nearly 89 percent in the years 18-25.¹⁴⁶ A number of the Fortification texts speak of workers, travellers and other individuals referred to as Indians, Babylonians, Carians, Arabs, Greeks, Egyptians, etc., who were involved in the construction activities outside Persepolis.¹⁴⁷

Some of the earliest Treasury tablets mention a columned hall (probably the Apadana), which seems to have been built during the last years of Darius' reign.¹⁴⁸ Quite interesting is the information embedded in some of the Treasury texts in connection with work being performed by the labourers. In the second and third years of Xerxes there are more than 500 Syrian, Egyptian, and Ionian workers designated as "up-carriers" who participated in the construction of columned halls.¹⁴⁹ From the fourth year of Xerxes onwards there is mention of "wood-workers" and sculptors, people "working on iron doors", and decorators making reliefs and working on "gold inlays". The peak of activity appears to be in the latter part of Xerxes' reign, (years 19 and 20) during which 1,300 "Treasury workers" were employed at the site. In the twentieth year, a large number of individuals were involved at Persepolis. Tablet 51 mentions 117 artisans; tablets 65, 66, and 67 indicate a total of 1,330 "Treasury workers". According to Cameron, the numerals show that a "large

143 Cameron, *PTT*; "Persepolis Treasury Tablets: old and new", *JNES* 17, pp. 161-176; "New tablets from the Persepolis Treasury", *JNES* 24, pp. 167-192.

144 Hallock, "The evidence of the Persepolis tablets", *CHI* II, p. 589. For the information on the historical geography of the region, see Koch, "Die achämenidische Poststrasse von Persepolis nach Susa", *AMI* 19, pp. 133-147; Arfae, "La grande route Persépolis-Suse: une lecture des tablettes provenant des Fortifications de Persépolis", *Topoi* 9, pp. 33-45; Potts, "The Persepolis Fortification texts and the Royal Road; another look at the Fahlian area", *L'archive des Fortification de Persépolis*, pp. 275-301.

145 Dandamaev, "Persepolis Elamite tablets", *EncIr*, online edition; Stolper *et al.*, "Persepolis administrative archives", *EncIr*, online edition. There is also an exceptional tablet in Old Persian, which indicates that Old Persian writing and language was also used for practical recording (Stolper and Tavernier, "An Old Persian administrative tablet from the Persepolis fortification", *Arta* 2007.001, , <http://www.achemenet.com/document/2007.001-Stolper-Tavernier.pdf>, pp. 5-6, fig. 6).

146 Hallock, *PFT*, p. 74. Stolper thinks that the temporal distribution of the Fortification tablets has to do with the information flow of the administrative system, not with the rate of work done by the people supported by the system (Matthew Stolper, personal communication).

147 Henkelman and Stolper, "Ethnic identity and ethnic labelling at Persepolis: the case of the Skudrians", *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide*, *Persika* 14, pp. 278-284.

148 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 13.

149 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 14, Table1, and p. 16.

project was afoot".¹⁵⁰ A larger number of "stone-relief makers", "wood-workers", and "ornament makers" were employed from the fourth month of the twentieth year of Xerxes' reign to the fifth year of Artaxerxes I.¹⁵¹

THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

The successive construction phases at Persepolis have been examined by Schmidt, Tilia, Calmeyer, and Roaf from different points of view. Tilia's work was based on a study of masonry and architectural features.¹⁵² Calmeyer's approach is art historical focusing on reliefs and the evolution of their styles.¹⁵³ This work was later elaborated by Roaf, whose research on the construction phases at the site is by far the most comprehensive study of its kind.¹⁵⁴

The beginning of the construction activities on the Terrace of Persepolis is uncertain, but, according to Darius' inscription on the south wall, Persepolis was a new "fortress" or foundation. There is, however, evidence for an earlier occupation of the locality of Persepolis by Cyrus or probably Cambyses. The unfinished stepped structure at Takht-e Rostam located half-way between Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, has been identified by some scholars as the tomb of Cambyses, and by others as a construction dated to the reign of Darius.¹⁵⁵ The nearby remains of a palatial building at Bagh-e Firuzi also antedate the constructions at Persepolis.¹⁵⁶ The following chronology dif-

fers from those presented by Michael Roaf and Peter Calmeyer.

Period I (515-490). The first period is when Darius began to lay out the foundations of the Terrace. The earliest Fortification Tablets were produced in this period (510 B.C.), when Parsa along with another town in the region, Mattezish, was mentioned.¹⁵⁷ The large audience hall, the Apadana, was under construction during this period. The Terrace included two entrances, one from the south, near the Foundation inscriptions of Darius, the other further to the east. Initially, access to the platform was through a stairway set in the south wall, where Darius placed the Foundation inscription. A second passageway led to the Treasury, which was probably among the first structures to be completed on the Terrace. It is quite possible that there existed a path near the north-eastern corner for the transport of stone from the quarries and of other building materials.

Period II (490-480). Darius continued the work at Persepolis until his death. In 486, he was succeeded by his son, Xerxes, who built and/or completed most of the constructions in the city. In his inscriptions, Xerxes often explicitly states that he has completed what his father began. It seems likely that Xerxes was most active immediately following his father's death and before his military expedition against the Greeks (480-479 B.C.). Nonethe-

150 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 15, Table 1, and p. 17. This is probably the Hall of a Hundred Columns.

151 Tablet 79 mentions 1,149 "artisans working on the gateway to the columned hall" (Cameron, *PTT*, page 15, Table 1, and p. 17).

152 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations II*, pp. 3-27.

153 Calmeyer, "Das Persepolis der Spätzeit", *AchHist VI*, pp. 285-303.

154 Roaf, *Sculpture and Sculptors at Persepolis*, Iran 21, pp. 138-159.

155 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 214; Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 24; Kleiss, "Der Takht-I Rostam bei Persepolis und das Kyrusgrab in Pasargadae", *ArchAnz*, pp. 157-162; Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pp. 302-304. Roaf surprisingly thinks that it is an earlier version of the tomb of Darius (*Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis*, p. 150). Herzfeld partly excavated the structure but never published a report. For a recent discussion, see Bessac and Boucharlat, "Le monument de Takht-e Rostam, près de Persépolis dit 'tombeau inachevé de Cambyse' : note technique et reconsidérations", <http://www.achemenet.com/document/2010.003-Bessac&Boucharlat.pdf>, pp. 35-36.

156 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations II*, pp. 79-80.

157 Hallock, *PFT*, p. 523.

less, Xerxes continued to build throughout his reign—and even during the invasion of Greece. By invading Greece, Xerxes was also completing work begun by his father, Darius, who had invaded mainland Greece in 490 B.C. The Apadana was probably completed in this period. The Gate of All Lands was built, and various columned halls were added to the northern flank of the Treasury, in response to an increase of construction activities at the site. The northern and eastern fortifications were also constructed in this period. The construction of the Tachara that had begun under Darius was also completed by Xerxes as confirmed by his inscription on the stone lintels in the southern portico. Outside the Terrace, most of the residential and administrative buildings in the Southern plain date to this period.

Period III (479-458). After the end of the war with Greece, Xerxes found time to resume construction activities at the site. By the 19th year of his reign (467 B.C.), 1,300 workmen were employed at Parsa, and the following year more than 2,000 men were involved in building activities, implying that a large project was taking place.¹⁵⁸ This project was probably the construction of the Hall of a Hundred Columns, which was completed by Xerxes' son and successor, Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.). The main staircase in the northwest dates to the reign of Xerxes as well. The present-day Treasury was built immediately after razing the eastern part of the earlier building. The Treasury had three phases, the latest of which coincides with the construction of the Harem. The western part of the Treasury became the base of the L-shaped Harem.¹⁵⁹ Two narrow stairways connected the westernmost part of the Harem to Xerxes' Palace, which stands on a raised platform higher than the base of the Harem. Xerxes' Palace was probably a later addition too; originally,

the stairways mounted to a large open court in front of the Apadana that Xerxes completed as he did for his father's private palace, Tachara. The work on the central building, Tripylon, and the huge Hall of a Hundred Columns was in progress in this period. Artaxerxes I completed also the final touches of the Tripylon since there is a similarity between the reliefs of the main hall of the Tripylon and those of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.¹⁶⁰ The combat scenes of the king and a mythological animal are also similar to the ones in the Harem. The construction work for another monumental gate in front of the Hall of a Hundred Columns began under Artaxerxes I. He also built a private palace in the residential sector, which was later dismantled. By the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign (458 B.C.) building activity at the site had come to a standstill. The reason for such an interruption is unclear. In the absence of textual evidence for almost two generations, there is a gap in the history of construction activities at the site.

Period IV (423-330). Darius II's reign was marked by the Empire's diplomatic efforts and military pressure in recapturing the coastal cities of Asia Minor. The Great King's policy to support financially Sparta against Athens may have been a good reason to halt the construction works at Persepolis though the king's tomb was constructed in the dynastic necropolis at Naqsh-e Rostam in the same architectural tradition as his illustrious ancestors' eternal abode. The early years of the reign of Artaxerxes II was marked by the conflict and war with his younger brother named Cyrus the Younger who was finally killed in battle in 401. Artaxerxes II is better known for his construction activities at Susa but he also had his tomb built at Persepolis on the western slope of Kuh-e Rahmat. Artaxerxes III (358-338 B.C.) decided to resume the beautification of the dynastic metropolis after sixty

158 Cameron, *PTT*, p. 17.

159 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 199-200.

160 Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis*, p. 158.

years. The ancestral metropolis again became the centre of attention and artistic creations. In order to appreciate his building activities, one must consider that some parts on the Terrace had been left unfinished since the reign of his great grandfather. At least three areas were rebuilt, altered or remodelled during his reign: the residential sector of the Terrace in the south-west with Palace 'H', the southern façade of Palace 'G' and the western staircase of Tachara; the eastern rooms of the Hall of a Hundred Columns; and the north rock-cut tomb on the slope of the mountain.¹⁶¹ The crude stonework used in the blocking of the south entrance (in the vicinity of Darius' Foundation inscription), dates to this period as well. From what has been left from his time at Persepolis, it seems that Artaxerxes III desired to identify himself with the deeds of his great ancestor, Darius I. The rupestrial art of the façade of his tomb strikingly resembles that of Darius the Great at Naqsh-e Rostam. His addition of another staircase to the western side of Darius' Palace, copying the same style and motifs, can be considered as another attempt to revive Darius' constructions. As Ghirshman writes, the "fate seemed to offer Persia a last chance of salvation by bringing to the throne a man who, though without doubt cruel and brutal, possessed a will of iron and the authority of a statesman".¹⁶² In the span of a decade, the Empire was completely restored, and seemed to be as the strong as it was under Darius the Great. Had Artaxerxes III not been assassinated, the destiny of the Empire and Persepolis would have followed a very different path.

FUNCTION AND OTHER RELATED PROBLEMS

Scholars still debate just why Darius created this splendid City of the Persians. Equally strange, the city is hardly ever mentioned in Classical texts. Whereas contemporary Greeks were better informed about such Achaemenid cities as Ecbatana and Susa, they apparently knew nothing of Persepolis. The Greek historian Herodotus (485-425 B.C.), for instance, never refers to Persepolis. Nor does the Greek medical doctor Ctesias, who spent twenty years in the Achaemenid court, and who had presumably seen the tomb of Darius at the "double mountain", never visited Persepolis.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, there are traces of the presence of Greek workers in Persia in both archaeological records and Achaemenid inscriptions. Darius mentions Ionian and Lydian stonecutters employed in the construction of his palace at Susa (DPs). It is likely that the same team of workers and masons were transferred from Susa to Persepolis where traces of five intact and thirty-four fragmentary Greek inscriptions of East Greek origin have been found in the quarries of Kuh-e Rahmat. Carratelli, on epigraphic evidence, dates them to the end of the sixth or early fifth century B. C.¹⁶⁴ Besides, there are graffiti of two bearded figures and parts of two lions found on a fragment from the Tachara.¹⁶⁵ All this indicates a Greek presence at the site notwithstanding the silence of contemporary Greek sources about Persepolis. The Greek sources, therefore, cannot help in determining the function of the site.

161 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations* II, pp. 26-27; Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis*, p. 158; Calmeyer, "Das Persepolis der Spätzeit", *AchHist* IV, p. 13.

162 Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 201.

163 It is Diodorus (II, 13) who mentions Ctesias' doubtful journeys in Persia (see Cook, *The Persian Empire*, p. 22).

164 Carratelli, "Greek inscriptions of the Middle East", *EW* 16, pp. 32-33.

165 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 251 and pl. 72. Herzfeld chiseled off the fragment with bearded heads in 1923 as he wrote in his journal: "Discovered something wonderful: two heads of men and the forequarters of a lion, drawn on a foot of Darius. Cannot be photographed. Tried to chisel the foot off. Barbaric, but the little heads are works of the first rank, the finest that exists of Achaemenid art". He sold the fragments to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1945 (Dusinberre, "Herzfeld in Persepolis", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 146).

Persepolis as a ritual city. The mainstream view has always been that the city with its palatial buildings was the location for the celebration of Iranian New Year, Nowruz. This is solely based on the decorated panels and reliefs of the monumental staircases of the Apadana. A number of European travellers mention the figures of gift-bearers on the staircases of the Apadana.¹⁶⁶ Without clearly writing that Persepolis was the place for the celebration of Nowruz, Herzfeld suggested that the site “seems to have been a place that was founded and kept for historical and sentimental reasons in the homeland of the dynasty but used only for special ceremonial occasion”.¹⁶⁷ For Godard, since there is no trace of continuous or prolonged residence at Persepolis, the city “seems to have become fairly rapidly a sort of symbolic monument to Achaemenid grandeur, the image of its power, the Holy of Holies of the Empire, where every sovereign went, no doubt once a year at Nawruz [*sic*] (the New Year), to visit the tombs of his ancestors and receive the homage and tribute of the peoples who, in Darius’ words, bore his throne”.¹⁶⁸ Both Pope and Ghirshman thought that the site was the place for the ritual ceremonies of the New Year. Pope, discarding the function of Persepolis as a capital city or an administrative centre, wrote that the “great ritual processions heralding the New Year (the spring equinox)” took place at the site. He enthusiastically interprets the reliefs as the symbols of the New Year.¹⁶⁹ Ghirshman reconstructs the whole procession of the New Year festival in four phases, indicating that the layout of the Terrace corresponds to two significant moments in the celebration: the audience granted by the king to high dignitaries and nobles of the empire; the reception of the

delegations from various parts of the empire. The procession was as follows: 1) After passing through the Gate of All Lands, the nobles crossed the forecourt of the Apadana. The scenes on the decorated staircases gave the king’s guests a preview of what they were soon to see. The king and his entourage watched the procession from a “royal box”, projecting from the Terrace, in front of the western portico of the Apadana. 2) then the king and his entourage moved to the Tripylon; 3) a banquet was served in the Palace of Darius, the approaches of which are decorated with “servants shown coming up the steps and bringing the dishes and animals to be eaten by the guests”; 4) after the meal was over, the king and his guests returned to the Tripylon by way of the east door; 5) the procession entered the Hall of a Hundred Columns where the last phase took place, during which the king was transported to the columned hall on his throne surmounted by the figure of Ahuramazda.¹⁷⁰ For Ghirshman, the meaning of the scene on the doorways of that palace is that all the treasures (gifts) offered to the Achaemenid sovereign were to be delivered to the chief treasurer of the city in front of the king.¹⁷¹ The thesis was then elaborated by Kurt Erdmann who, in considering the presence of rock-cut tombs at Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, points out the funerary function of the site where the “rule of an Achaemenid king began and ended”.¹⁷² Finally, in a highly speculative and fanciful article, James Mathias Fennelly, a professor of theology and a Presbyterian minister, tried to reconstruct the celebration of a Persian *akitu* at Persepolis in which the Persian god Ahnramazda plays the role of Marduk. Based on Neo-Babylonian rituals, Fennelly reconstructs, without evidence, a Persian New year’s festival.¹⁷³

166 A full historiography is given in Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Nowruz in Persepolis”, *AchHis* VII, pp. 176-195.

167 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 222.

168 Godard, *The Art of Iran*, p. 119.

169 Pope, “Persepolis as a ritual city”, *Archaeology* 10/2, pp. 129-130.

170 Ghirshman, *The Arts of Ancient Iran*, pp. 156-202.

171 Ghirshman, “Notes iraniennes VII. A propos de Persépolis”, *ArtAsi* 20/4, pp. 274-276.

172 Erdmann, “Persepolis: Daten und Deutung”, *MDOG* 92, pp. 46-47.

173 Fennelly, “The Persepolis ritual”, *BA* 43/3, pp. 135-162. The theory was strongly criticized (Levine *et al.*, “The Persepolis ritual. Reply to James Fennelly”, *BA* 44, pp. 72-74). For the Persepolis ritual, see also Razm-

There have been studies by Nylander, Calmeyer, and Sancisi-Weerdenburg arguing against this interpretation of the significance of the decorated panels on the staircases of the Apadana, and whether or not they represent the great ceremony of the Nowruz. Calmeyer states that all the reliefs at Persepolis can be explained as “expressions of royalty” and “none of them has a special religious connection”. According to Calmeyer, the decorative programme at Persepolis is “exclusively secular” without depicting realistic scenes. The images are expressions of kingship, to be seen and venerated “during the long time that the kings were not present, maybe for the time when the kings would not be present any more”.¹⁷⁴ Sancisi-Weerdenburg who examined western travellers’ interpretations of the reliefs, writes that there is no indication of Nowruz being celebrated at Persepolis. She does not, however, explain the function of the site, and the meaning of the reliefs and gift-bearers. She discusses the notion of gifts and tributes, and indicates that “gifts” are items that voluntarily offered while “tributes” are enforced contributions.¹⁷⁵ Ker Porter was among the first visitors who pointed out the similarity between the decorated panels of gift-bearers and the Iranian New Year celebration based on his experience:¹⁷⁶

To an eye which had so lately witnessed a vernal procession to the foot of a Persian throne, the present scene seemed well adapted for a similar celebration; and as the representation of the tributary procession along the face of the terrace, turned the faces of all the groups to the entrance which fronted this central line of columns, it appeared to mark their approach thither, to some adequate object, which could only be the king. Hence, we may consider this terrace as the distinguished place for the grand ceremonies of the court; and, as the sovereign is now, and by every account always has been

seated above the level of his courtiers ; on this very marble pavement, or flooring of some “ costly wood,” which I have supposed formerly covered these rugged pedestals, probably stood the throne ; which held the good and the great, or the proud and the mighty monarchs of Persia for many generations ; who, seated here, surrounded by their nobles, ministers, and guards, with ease beheld the epitome of their vast empire, laying the offerings of provinces and kingdoms at their feet.

It does not seem that the reliefs on the staircases of the Apadana display a procession of “enforced” tribute bearing. They represent scenes of deliberate offering of what Gerold Walser calls “gifts of honour”.¹⁷⁷ Sancisi-Weerdenburg also mentions the removal of the central panel on the reliefs of the gift-bearers at the Apadana. The panel representing an audience scene was removed later – probably during the reign of Artaxerxes I – and was replaced by an orthostat showing Persian and Median guards. The scene is essential in connecting the Apadana reliefs, and its removal indicates that the meaning of the decoration programme on the staircases of the Apadana was changed.¹⁷⁸ A propos, Ghirshman writes that the courtyard in which the audience reliefs were found was built by Darius to serve as a temporary throne-room while waiting for the Apadana hall to be completed:¹⁷⁹

C’est dans cette salle que, d’après moi, Darius recevait les délégations des nations dont les présents étaient enfermés dans la Trésorerie à côté, et sous la surveillance de la garnison installée en face.

The Greek sources give no information on Persepolis before the sack of the city in 330 B.C. If all those representatives had come to Persepolis, it would have been known all over the empire. It is, however, certain that the splendid reliefs of audiences and gift-bearers on the

jou, “Persepolis: a reinterpretation of the palaces and their function”, *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, pp. 231-253.

174 Calmeyer, “Textual sources for the interpretation of Achaemenian palace decorations”, *Iran* 18, p. 61.

175 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Nowruz in Persepolis”, *AchHist* VII, p. 198.

176 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 638.

177 Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis*, p. 23.

178 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Nowruz in Persepolis”, *AchHist* VII, p. 201; Jacobs, “Achämenidische Kunst – Kunst im Achämenidenreich”, *AMI* 34, p. 367.

179 Ghirshman, “Notes iraniennes VII. A propos de Persépolis”, *ArtAsi* 20/4, p. 277.

staircases of the Apadana and other palaces reflect the symbolism of some sort of ceremony or ritual which took place in or outside of the city. It is quite possible that the site was the location of a ceremony related to the celebration of the New Year which was probably at the summer solstice or at the autumnal equinox.¹⁸⁰

Persepolis seen as a repertoire of Mesopotamian and ancient Near Eastern art. Some scholars have attempted to compare the reliefs at Persepolis to the ancient Near Eastern iconographic repertoire instead of finding explanation in the ancient Iranian tradition. In a lecture delivered in 1966, Jean Deshayes discussed the influence of Mesopotamian art on the reliefs at Persepolis with the following conclusion:¹⁸¹

...ces emprunts sont d'origines diverses et ont suivi des chemins multiples pour parvenir jusqu'à Persépolis: vieux thèmes mésopotamiens retransmis par les Assyriens, thèmes égyptiens passés en Syrie, et de là en Assyrie, peut-être à l'époque mitannienne... Rien dans la religion achéménide ne justifiait l'emploi de tels symboles: leur adoption s'explique avant tout par le désir des rois perses de rivaliser avec leurs prédécesseurs les plus prestigieux, de la même façon que le cérémonial somptueux de la cour achéménide, tel qu'il apparaît à travers les admirables reliefs de Persépolis, ne fait que reproduire dans ses lignes essentielles celui des grandes cours mésopotamiens.

Carl Nylander's reading of Biruni's *Athār al-Bāqiya* is that the Nowruz in Iran has undergone changes in the course of time and that from the point of view of observational astronomy the Persian year began at the summer solstice. Like Deshayes, Calmeyer and Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Nylander tends to see the reliefs as part of the ancient Near Eastern icono-

graphic repertoire.¹⁸² I am inclined to believe that the interpretation of these decorated structures should be connected with Iranian traditions of festivities rather than derived from Classical perspectives.

Persepolis as an observatory of celestial bodies. The idea of Persepolis being used for the observation of celestial bodies throughout the year was as old as the legends of Jamshid, the mythical king of ancient Iran to whom the construction of the monuments is attributed (see below, chapter III). According to Hans Peter L'Orange, the Achaemenid king – as represented on the tomb reliefs – is placed in a “world of astral symbols”. He is facing the Sun and the Moon, both represented in front of him in the direction of the throne. L'Orange states that the Sun is represented as a winged solar disc in the figure of the Ahuramazda or Farvahar, and the Moon as the disc of the full Moon is placed behind with the crescent of the new Moon inlaid. He writes:¹⁸³

We witness a solemn act by which the Great King adjusts himself to the movements of the heavens, thus manifesting his own astral power. Just as Sun, Moon and planets in completing their orbits determine the fate of the universe, so the movements of the royal throne reveal the fatal power of the Great King: he is analogous to the heavenly bodies,...

In the late 1960s, Wolfgang Lentz fully developed the idea of the cosmic function of Persepolis. Lentz observed that the constructions of Persepolis were directed on two axes crossing each other vertically, and the longitudinal axes deviated by about 20 degrees from the north-south direction. With the help of the German astronomer, Wolfhard Schlosser, Lentz's calculations resulted in the thesis according to

180 Calmeyer, “Textual sources for the interpretation of Achaemenian palace decorations”, *Iran* 18, p. 56. For a full reassessment of the question of the Now Ruz celebration at Persepolis, see Imanpour, “The function of Persepolis: was Norooz celebrated at Persepolis?”, *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europea held in Ravenna, 6-11 October 2003*, vol. 1, pp. 115-121.

181 Deshayes, “Origine et signification des représentations symboliques à Persépolis”, *Revue de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Téhéran*, p. 12.

182 Nylander, “Al-Beruni and Persepolis”, *AI I*, pp. 143-144, 150.

183 L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, p. 85. L'Orange's thesis was influential on Ghirshman's reconstruction of the New Year celebration at Persepolis.

which the axes point towards the rising or setting of prominent celestial bodies, on prominent dates of the year. Lentz states that one of the functions of Persepolis was the observation of celestial bodies with the techniques of observational astronomy “with an equipment developed with every refinement of a purposefully planned architecture”. The results of such observations led to the proclamation of the time when the representatives of the empire would gather at a fixed time of the year. Lentz rejects the beginning of the Achaemenid year being in the spring due to the fact that assembling the delegations in March “would mean that the majority of them had to undertake their journey and the transport of animals and precious gifts, in the depths of winter. That the old Persian year started at the summer solstice is attested by Biruni”.¹⁸⁴ James George, who simultaneously but independently researched the question of the orientation of Persepolis, agreed with Lenz and Schlosser. George writes that the orientation of Persepolis is solstitial, related to both sunrise and sunset on the longest day of the year. The lines to sunrise and sunset on the summer and winter solstices cross each other and “form a sort of St. Andrew’s Cross”, with the crossing spot being the main hall of the Tripylon.¹⁸⁵

Persepolis as a stronghold. In 1992, the present author discussed the thesis that Darius’ initial idea for the foundation of Persepolis was to build a stronghold. Persepolis was the “richest city under the sun”, and it was, thus,

the depository of the imperial treasures which had to be safeguarded. Aside from the defensive fortifications, the building of the main Treasury was probably the first to be completed on the platform of Persepolis.¹⁸⁶ On the Foundation inscriptions on the southern wall of the platform (DPf), Darius clearly refers to the site as a fortress. It is quite possible that the construction works began at a time when Darius had not yet overcome his enemies, and therefore felt the need for an impregnable stronghold where he could retain his influence in his homeland, Pars. The site probably never served its initial function. With the suppression of rebellions and the consolidation of the empire, the site was gradually transformed into a ceremonial or symbolic city. Without being a place of worship or a religious centre, Parsa acquired an aura of sanctity owing to its location in the homeland of the Achaemenids.¹⁸⁷ It is why it was not mentioned by the Greeks, and it is why it became the imperial cemetery of the Achaemenid kings, and it is because of such a sacred status that Alexander decided to burn it with the aim of destroying the spirit of the Persian empire.

Persepolis as the Highland capital. The location of Persepolis in the region of Anshan, the old Elamite capital of the Iranian Plateau, is far from being a matter of mere chance. By the time Darius ascended the throne of Persia, Elam and in particular Anshan had been absorbed into the new empire.¹⁸⁸ The choice for Susa as an strategic, well-situated location (half-way between the Plateau and Babylonia)

184 Lentz, “Has the function of Persepolis been fully recognized so far?”, *The Memorial Volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, p. 289. With the help of W. Schlosser and G. Gropp, Lentz published the results of his studies in detail in two complicated articles in German: “Persepolis – ein Beitrag zur Funktionsbestimmung”, *ZDMG* 18, pp. 957-983; “Persepolis -Weitere Beiträge zur Funktionsbestimmung”, *ZDMG* 121, pp. 254-268.

185 George, “Achaemenid orientations”, *Akten des VII Internationalen Kongress für Iransiche Kunst and Archäologie*, p. 200. The location was also re-examined by Yahya Zoka who published a picture of the stone in the Tripylon (Zoka, “Ta’in-e Nowruz dar Takht-e Jamshid”, *Bokhara* 6, pp. 184-185).

186 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 4; Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis*, pp. 151-159. See also Cahill’s discussion on the function of the Treasury (“The Treasury of Persepolis: gift-giving at the City of the Persians”, *AJA* 89/3, pp. 388-389).

187 Mousavi, “Parsa: a stronghold for Darius”, *EW* 42/3-4, pp. 206-207.

188 Stronach, “Anshan and Parsa: early Achaemenid history, art and architecture on the Iranian Plateau”, *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Persian Period*, pp. 38-39.

enabled Darius to achieve a nationalistic goal: “an Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, having Aryan lineage” built a palace in Elam where he had recently crushed three rebellions. If his palace at Susa was to dominate the Lowland, Persepolis was built to impact the Highland where stood the ruins of

Anshan, another centre of the old Elamite civilisation. Persepolis replaced Anshan as the Achaemenid palace at Susa surpassed the ruins of the Elamite city. In this way, the new king fulfilled his great predecessor’s role as the “king of Anshan and Susa”.¹⁸⁹

189 Jean Perrot brilliantly discusses why Darius chose Susa as one of the two poles in the Persepolis-Susa axis, a route that corresponded to the king’s transhumance (Perrot, “Le palais de Darius: nouvelles données archéologiques”, *CRAIB* 2010, pp. 430-431).

II PERSEPOLIS IN FLAMES

Persepolis ended in flames and these flames were a symbol. Perhaps they were intended to be, at any rate they have been, a sign to the world of the beginning of a new epoch. There is no deeper caesura in the 5000 years of history of the Ancient East than the period of Alexander, and there is no archaeological object produced after this time that does not bear its stamp... The Ancient East was dead, the conflagration of Persepolis its funeral pyre.¹

At the end of the year 331 BC, Alexander took the road to Persia through the Zagros mountains. At the Persian Gates, he had to face Ariobarzenes (Ariubarzan), the Satrap of Persia and his forces, whose heroic defence of the narrow pass inflicted the only defeat on Alexander that our sources allow us to know.² According to Classical sources, the Macedonians lost many men; it was finally a Lycian shepherd (probably a myth) who showed them a way round the pass, and this enabled them to dislodge the defenders. The pass, a key point on the road between Susa and Persepolis, lies in rugged mountains. There have been several modern attempts to identify the location, but none of them seems convincing. According to the most comprehensive study of the problem by Henry Speck, it seems that the defile at the entrance where Persian forces halted the advance of the Macedonian troops may be located in the vicinity of the modern town of Yasuj.³ In the end, the Macedonian army opened up the road to Persepolis. Fearing that the treasure might be plundered before his arrival, Alexander raced on with his light cavalry to reach the city in time.⁴ Tirdad, the treasurer in charge of the citadel of Persepolis,

sent a messenger to Alexander promising to surrender the city. He made arrangements for the transfer to happen quickly so that those who had planned to defend the city would not be able to seize power. Tridates (Tirdad) was rewarded for his treason: he continued to keep the same rank that he held under Darius. Alexander secured control of the citadel (the Terrace and its palaces); the fate of the palaces must have been discussed during the months of occupation. In contrast, he turned over the city and its inhabitants to his troops who insatiably killed and looted for several days.⁵

There are two bodies of evidence for the Macedonian destruction of the site: the literary evidence and the archaeological evidence. The literary evidence is almost exclusively based on the Greek and Latin sources dealing with the history and exploits of Alexander the Great. The archaeological record concerning the burning of Persepolis became available during the systematic excavations of Persepolis.

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Four major historians of Alexander provide the essential information on the capture and destruction of the city. Of these, the earliest is Diodorus of Sicily who lived in the first century B.C., and who gives the earliest description of Persepolis. Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plutarch both lived in the first century after Christ, and Arrian wrote his *Anabasis of Alexander* in the late first/early second century A.D.

1 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 44.

2 Badian, "Alexander in Iran", *CHI*, vol. 2, p. 443 (which is based on Classical sources: Arr. 3.18.4-9; Curt. 5.3,23-5.2; Plut. Alex. 37.1-3; Diod. 17.68.4-7).

3 Speck, "Alexander at the Persian Gates," *AJAH* 1/1, p. 161ff. A full account of previous identifications attempted by Herzfeld, Stein, Stolze, and others is given in Speck's report.

4 Hamilton, *Alexander the Great*, p. 88.

5 Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire*, p. 92; The events immediately preceding the capture of the city are carefully summarized and examined by Briant, *HPE*, p. 850.

These accounts are based either on earlier sources that are now lost or on records left by Alexander's own companions.

Diodorus gives the longest account of the event in his *Library of History* (17.70-71) as follows:

Persepolis was the capital of the Persian kingdom. Alexander described it to the Macedonians as the most hateful of the cities of Asia, and gave it over to his soldiers to plunder, all but the palaces. It was the richest city under the sun and the private houses had been furnished with every sort of wealth over the years. The Macedonians raced into it slaughtering all the men whom they met and plundering the residences; many of the houses belonged to the common people and were abundantly supplied with furniture and wearing apparel of every kind. Here much silver was carried off and no little gold, and many rich dresses gay with sea purple or with gold embroidery became the prize of the victors. The enormous palaces, famed throughout the whole civilized world, fell victim to insult and utter destruction.

The Macedonians gave themselves up to this orgy of plunder for a whole day and still could not satisfy their boundless greed for more. Such was their exceeding lust for loot withal that they fought with each other and killed many of their fellows who had appropriated a greater portion of it. The richest of the finds some cut through with their swords so that each might have his own part. Some cut off the hands of those who were grasping at disputed property, being driven mad by their passions. They dragged off women, clothes and all, converting their captivity into slavery. As Persepolis had exceeded all other cities in prosperity, so in the same measure it now exceeded all others in misery.

Alexander ascended to the citadel terrace and took possession of the treasure there. This had been accumulated from the state revenues, beginning with Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, down to that time, and the vaults were packed full of silver and gold. The total was found to be one hundred and twenty thousand talents, when the gold was estimated in terms of silver. Alexander wanted to take some money with him to meet the costs of the war, and to deposit the rest in Susa and keep it under guard in that city. Accordingly he sent for a vast number of mules from Babylon and Mesopotamia, as well as from Susa itself, both pack and harness animals as well as three thousand pack camels. By these means Alexander transported everything to the desired places. He felt bitter enmity to the inhabitants. He did not trust them, and he meant to destroy Persepolis utterly.

Diodorus' account bespeaks the extreme barbarism with which the inhabitants of the city

were treated by the conquerors. According to Arrian, whose version of the incident is the shortest of all, there was a debate between Alexander and his friend and companion, Parmenion, on whether or not to destroy the palaces (*Anabasis*, III, 18):

He set the Persian palace on fire, though Parmenio urged him to preserve it, arguing, among other things, that it was not good to destroy what was now his own property, and that the Asians would not so readily adhere to him, but would suppose that even he had not decided to retain the empire of Asia but only to conquer and pass on. Alexander said that he wished to punish the Persians for sacking Athens and burning the temples when they invaded Greece, and to exact retribution for all the other injuries they had done to the Greeks. I too do not think that Alexander showed good sense in this action, nor that he could punish Persians of a long time ago.

In these versions, as in Strabo's *Geography* (15.3. 6), Alexander destroyed Persepolis to "avenge the Greeks, because the Persians had destroyed both temples and cities of the Greeks by fire and sword". But the third historian of Alexander believed that the burning was an act of perversion and folly. Quintus Curtius Rufus, a Roman historian of the first century, wrote in detail on the plundering of the city and the killing of its inhabitants before dealing with the conqueror's intent to decide on the fate of Persepolis (*The History of Alexander*, V. 6):

[1] Alexander called a meeting of his generals the next day. He told them that no city was more hateful to the Greeks than Persepolis, the capital of the old kings of the city from which troops without number had poured forth, from which first Darius and then Xerxes had waged an unholy war on Europe. To appease the spirits of their forefather they should wipe it out, he said. [2] By now the Persians had abandoned the town, panic scattering them in various directions, and the king led in the phalanx without delay. Alexander had stormed or accepted the surrender of many cities which were full of royal treasure, but the wealth of this city eclipsed everything in the past. [3] Into it the barbarians had packed the riches of all Persia: mounds of gold and silver. Huge quantities of clothing, and furniture which was not functional but ostentatiously ornate. [4] This led to armed fighting among the victors: anyone who had taken richer spoils was seen as an enemy and, since the men could not carry everything that came into their possession, goods were

no longer indiscriminately pillaged but subjected to prior appraisal. [5] They ripped apart royal robes as each man grabbed a piece for himself, and they hacked to pieces with axes vases that were precious works of art. Nothing was left intact. Nothing removed in one piece. Statues were dismembered and individuals dragged away the limbs they had broken off. [6] But cruelty as well as avarice ran amok in the captured city: soldiers laden with gold and silver butchered their captives, now of no worth, and cut down people they came across at random anywhere, people who could previously have won mercy by promising to ransom themselves. [7] Many accordingly anticipated the enemy's violence by suicide, putting on their most expensive clothes and hurling themselves down from the walls with their wives and children. Some had set fire to their homes — something which it seemed the enemy would do anyway — to burn themselves alive along with their families. [8] Eventually Alexander issued orders for his men to keep their hands off the women and their dress. It is reported that the quantity of money captured here was huge almost beyond belief [9] but unless we are also going to be skeptical about other matters, we must accept that this city's treasure comprised 120,000 talents.

The citadel had been apparently intact with its palaces until one night, during a drinking banquet, Alexander followed one of his female courtesans' advice to set fire to it. Quintus Curtius continues his account as follows (V. 7):

[2] ...he [Alexander] was attending day-time drinking parties at which women were present — not, indeed, such women as it was a crime to violate, but courtesans who had been leading disreputable lives with soldiers.

[3] One of the latter was Thais. She too had had too much to drink, when she claimed that, if Alexander gave the order to burn the Persian palace, he would earn the deepest gratitude among all the Greeks. This was what the people whose cities the Persians had destroyed were expecting, she said. [4] As the drunken whore gave her opinion on a matter of extreme importance, one or two who were themselves the worse for drink agreed with her. The king, too, was enthusiastic rather than acquiescent. "Why do we not avenge Greece, then and put the city to the torch?" he asked.

[5] They were all flushed with wine, and they got up, drunk, to burn a city which they had spared while under arms. Alexander took the lead, setting fire to the palace, to be followed by his drinking companions, his attendants and the courtesans. Large sections of the palace had been made of cedar, so they quickly took flame and spread the conflagration over a large area. [6] The army, encamped not far from the city, caught sight of the

fire, thinking it was accidental, came running in a body to help. [7] But when they reached the palace portico, they saw their king himself piling on torchwood, so they dropped the water they had brought and began throwing dry wood into the blaze themselves.

[8] Such was the end of the palace that had ruled all the East. From it in bygone days laws had been sought by so many nations; it had been the birthplace of so many kings...

The last historian of Alexander to be quoted here is Plutarch (*Lives*, XXXVII-XXXVIII) whose account of the event corroborates that of the others; besides, it informs us on the identity of Thais as the mistress of Ptolemy. Plutarch's account was probably the source of inspiration for Rochegrosse's famous painting, *L'incendie de Persépolis*, in which the revelers' horrifying frenzy is depicted (pl. 11):

At length he arrived in Persepolis, where, according to historians, he discovered as great a quantity of species as in Susa, and found employment for 10,000 pairs of mules and for 5000 camels in removing all the other rich booty which was discovered in the city.

Here a large statue of Xerxes was overthrown by the crowd of soldiers who were noisily crushing their way into the palace. The sight caused Alexander to stop and to address the fallen figure as though it were alive. "Shall I pass," he said, "and leave you prostrate because of your expedition against the Greeks? or shall I raise you up because in all else you were magnanimous and virtuous?"

For a long time he communed with himself in silence: and then, at last, passed upon his way.

As it was the winter season, he continued four months in Persepolis with the object of resting his troops. The first time he took his seat beneath the golden canopy upon the royal throne of Persia, Demaratus of Corinth, who was a sincere wellwisher and ancestral friend of the King, is said to have burst into senile tears and exclaimed: "Oh, what a mighty joy has been denied those generations of Greeks who died ere they beheld Alexander seated on the throne of Darius!"

Upon the eve of marching thence against Darius, the King and his companions surrendered themselves to the delights of wine and festivity with much abandon. The womenfolk even crept to their lovers' sides during the revel and took their share in the drinking bout. Thais of Attica, the most celebrated among them, and mistress of Ptolemy who afterwards was King of Egypt, became intoxicated, and, partly in pretty compliment to Alexander, partly in a spirit of pleasantry, launched out into a long harangue, which, though quite conformable to

the custom of her native country, exceeded the limits which her station warranted. She was, she said, fully compensated for all the toils she had endured in her wanderings through Asia by thus revelling in the proud palaces of the Persian kings: it would give her yet keener joy, when the revel was over, to burn down the palace of Xerxes who had burned Athens to the ground: she herself would set a light to it beneath the eyes of the King so that report might go forth to men that the women in Alexander's camp had avenged Greece upon the Persians more sternly than all his famous generals had done by land and sea.

This speech was received with loud clapping of hands and uproar, and the King's friends encouraged her proposals and displayed a keen desire to put them into execution. The King swept away by their enthusiasm, leapt to his feet and, with a garland still upon his head, led the way from the banqueting hall, torch in hand, while the rest of the company followed him, dancing and shouting. They surrounded the palace; and the rest of the Macedonians, hearing what was afoot, came running with torches in their hands to join the throng; for they were filled with satisfaction, because they hoped that this determination to burn and destroy the royal palace was proof that Alexander's heart was fixed in Macedonia, and that he had no thought of settling among the Persians.

Such is the account of these events given by some historians: though, according to others, the affair was the result of deliberate intention. There is general agreement, however, upon the fact that Alexander quickly repented of the deed and ordered the conflagration to be suppressed.

From the Classical sources one can conclude the following: 1) the city was not captured by force; 2) the monuments were vandalized and the city's inhabitants were ruthlessly massacred; 3) the treasures of the Achaemenid kings were seized and carefully transported to finance Alexander's further military expenses; 4) there was a gap of four months between the capture of the city and its destruction; 5) the decision that led to the burning of the palaces was made immediately before or during a revelry.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The great conflagration that consumed the city and its palaces was preceded by a careful pillaging of the royal treasures. Not a single complete vase or object in precious metal has been found in the excavations of the site. The pillagers took what was most valuable and easily carried off.⁶ Archaeological evidence confirms that fires were deliberately started at several places simultaneously. All the jewels such as insets or overlays adorning the neck, arms, clothes and weapons of the royal figures were systematically removed before the fire.⁷ All the royal tableware found in the Treasury was made of stone; Alexander's soldiers were thorough enough not to leave any vessels of silver or gold.⁸ As early as the nineteenth century, Ker Porter devoted a few pages of his account to a careful examination of the ruins in connection with Alexander's burning of the palaces:⁹

Certainly not a trace of the effects of fire is discernible on any of the adjacent walls; and it may be alleged, that if so considerable a building in their vicinity, had been consumed to ashes, the ravages of the flames must have reached and marked some of them.

But in looking on the plan, and perceiving how unconnectedly all the edifices stood from each other; not merely separated by spacious areas, but divided by detached terraces, we might easily imagine how one of them might be burnt to the ground, without a spark reaching any of the others. Besides, the solidity of the walls of these palaces are calculated to confine the fire, as in a furnace, within whichever of them it might be kindled, while it continued devouring all, interiorly, that was combustible in its way. The internal materials of the destroyed palace, according to Q. Curtius, (lib. v.), were cedar, and other consumable substances; these, with the splendid hangings, and carpets on the walls and floors, with the more ample draperies suspended over the usual openings in the sides of the grand saloons, for the double purpose of air

6 Hammond, "The archaeological and literary evidence for the burning of the Persepolis palaces", *CQ* 42/2, p. 359.

7 Shahbazi, "Iranians and Alexander", *AJAH* 2, p. 19, note 71.

8 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, p. 11. Mostafavi published two silver vessels found in the vicinity of Persepolis in 1942, which may have escaped the looters' attention ("Ānch-e az qārat-e Takht-e Jamshid be jāy māndeh ast", *Collected papers and articles on Iranian archaeology*, vol. 2, p. 1321).

9 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 647

and to shield them from the sun, would, altogether, when once the brand was set to the building, hasten its destruction.

Ker Porter thinks that some of the buildings were spared and inhabited later by Alexander after his return from India, and that the “riches of the ancient capital existed long after the Macedonian conquest” when Antiochus IV Epiphanes planned to pillage the city of Persepolis.¹⁰ Surprised by having found no trace of a violent conflagration after more than twenty-two centuries, Lord Curzon, whose meticulous description of Persepolis has stood the test of time, reluctantly accepts the Macedonian’s burning of the palaces:¹¹

It is not the least among the fascinations of the site that we can – without positive certainty it is true, but at least with more than moderate probability – feel ourselves contemplating, at a distance of 2,200 years, the speaking wreck of what was either, if the Greek historians are to be believed, the drunken freak of the conqueror, or, more probably, the act of a merciless but deliberate premeditation.

The archaeological evidence shows that most of the buildings on and below the Terrace were the object of a violent conflagration that destroyed the two large columned halls of the Apadana and the Hall of a Hundred Columns, the Treasury, and the Hadish. What the excavation reports have to say are as follows.

The Apadana. Schmidt remarks that the great audience hall of the kings (the Apadana) was completely destroyed during the conflagration:¹²

The excavation of the southeastern corner of the main hall provided additional proof that the Apadana was destroyed by a violent conflagration. The effect of fire was here even more pronounced than in most of the storerooms and the southeastern tower. The heat of the conflagration in the hall baked the drab-colored mud-bricks underneath the originally greenish-gray plaster of the wall faces to

such an extent that they turned light red, and most of the greenish-gray floor was burned and blackened to a depth of 5 mm. to 1 cm. below the surface.

He adds further that the doors, window frames, and shutters were in wood; to this, one must add the large beams of Lebanon cedar from the high ceiling. The walls were possibly wainscoted and the floors were covered with wood. The flames were fed by quantities of objects of combustible nature, including fabrics. There is no doubt that the mass of rubble accumulated in the eastern courtyard between the Apadana and the Hall of a Hundred Columns was the result of the collapse of the high ceilings of these palaces, which brought down all the superstructures. It was in excavating this rubble that Herzfeld discovered the eastern staircase of the Apadana and numerous inscribed glazed bricks that once decorated the towers of that magnificent audience hall.

The Hall of a Hundred Columns. The magnitude of the conflagration has been first documented in the Hall of a Hundred Columns. In this palace, masses of charcoal and ashes, and burned patches on the mud-brick portions of the bordering walls confirm that the structure had been destroyed by fire. Stolze and Andreas, who examined the building shortly after Farhad Mirza’s excavations in 1877, mention that the entire floor of the main hall was covered with a layer of ashes and charcoal, but they believed it to be the result of a gradual decomposition.¹³ Schmidt’s investigation also confirms that collapse of the Hall of a Hundred Columns and its portico was “caused by a conflagration, which may well have coincided with the burning of the Treasury, situated beyond the street on the south, and perhaps with the destruction of the

10 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 549.

11 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, pp. 180-181.

12 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 78-79. This was also observed by Weld after his partial excavation of one of the corner towers (Weld-Blundell, “Persepolis”, *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists*, vol. 2, p. 546).

13 Unable to consult their very rare book, I rely on Curzon’s quotation in *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, p. 187.

Apadana as well”.¹⁴ In regard to this, Herzfeld’s sarcastic remarks are noteworthy in that they are in support of a deliberate burning of the palace:¹⁵

Today the interior is an appalling picture of destruction, the result of fire. From one to two feet of ashes cover the ground and the black stone columns have been blasted by heat into countless tiny splinters, partially calcinated. Since the columns were of stone, the walls of earth and stone, the wooden ceiling covered with from three to six feet of earth, the room could not have been set ablaze unless it had been filled with combustible material. Here the fire that consumed Persepolis was started by Alexander. I wonder whether it was his bad taste to choose this pretentious Hall of a Hundred Columns instead of the Apadana for his banquet, or his good taste to burn the least beautiful of all the buildings.

The Treasury. Most of the rooms in the Treasury were no doubt filled with precious objects and combustible materials such as wooden furniture, texts, fabrics, carpets, and arrowheads with shafts of wood. More than three hundred columns supported those sections of the roof which covered the extensive halls, the larger rooms, and the porticoes of the Treasury in its final stage. The column shafts, being in wood, were consumed by fire. Most of the stone column bases, especially in the imposing main halls of the Treasury (Rooms 38 and 41), show traces of fire and scorched mud plaster. The effect of fire is visible on all surfaces of both doorjambs, an indication that the doors were made of wood. In the debris of Room 13, the excavators found three Alexandrian silver coins. According to Schmidt, the coins must have been lost after the destruction of the site, for one was minted about 325 and two were struck about 312 B.C. We know that Alexander passed by the site (in ruins) on his way back to Babylon in late 325 / early 324 B.C.¹⁶

Room 11 must have contained a considerable amount of inflammable material. Its walls were covered by a thick layer of burned debris. Particles of charred fabric were here found together with clay labels with impressions. Schmidt reports that the fire which destroyed the Treasury “raged with particular fury in Room 33. The mud-brick walls – covered with cracked patches of scorched plaster discolored red and black – were baked to a considerable depth”.¹⁷

In Room 34, which was primarily a storeroom for weapons, the fire was fed by great numbers of arrow shafts, partly preserved in carbonized lumps.¹⁸ All walls of Room 39 show the effect of a violent fire, and its debris contains a large amount of charred matter. The excavators found remnants of “arrow shafts, for about a thousand bronze arrowheads. In some columned halls the effect of fire was so strong that “most of the column bases were shattered or at least spalled by the heat”.¹⁹

The conflagration did not hit the monumental gates such as the Gate of All Lands and the fortifications on the Terrace which probably accommodated Alexander’s troops. We are informed by Quintus Curtius that the army encamped very close “came running in a body to help” when they saw flames. The excavations did not show any trace of burning in the fortifications, in particular in the area that Schmidt calls the Garrison quarters, located between the Treasury and the lowest slopes of Kuh-e Rahmat. Schmidt is probably right in stating “that three thousands of Alexander’s men could quite easily have been accommodated in the fortification system and in the Garrison quarters of Persepolis without being endangered by the burning of the palaces. As a matter of fact, they presumably enjoyed the spec-

14 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 132.

15 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 229.

16 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 160.

17 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 173.

18 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 175.

19 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 177-178.

tacle from the parapets of the fortress walls”.²⁰ Now, we must turn to the residential areas of the Terrace. Most of the structures in the Hadish, or the Palace of Xerxes, were pulverized during the conflagration. The Tachara must have also been set on fire but the higher quality and solidity of its stone account for its better state of preservation. Flandin and Coste cleared the debris accumulated in the main hall of the Palace of Darius in order to clarify its plan and to complete their surveying of the structure. The Germans Andreas and Stolze also worked in this sector of the site. It is quite possible that the debris in this building also contained traces of burning, which were not recognized or recorded.²¹ The south-western corner of the Terrace was probably reused by local rulers or the natives after the fall of the Achaemenids. Their rubble and fallen structures were soon removed, and some of the preserved ones – like door jambs and lintels were carried far away from Persepolis to be reused in later buildings.

The city. It should be remembered that Persepolis was a royal city with residences and houses built for the king and his entourage and noblemen. The remains of the city outside the Terrace show several traces of fire, which indicates that the conflagration, contrary to what has been written by some Classicists, did hit the city as well. The majority of the columned halls in Complex ‘H’ reveal traces of violent fire. Tadjvidi found fragments of charred beams in hall f4 of this building and its adjacent rooms.²² The unit was apparently full of combustible material, probably wood for preparing warm water to be used in the royal bath f6. Charred beams and scorched floors were also found in other rooms of this building. The excavator found pieces of burnt column shafts made of wood and covered

with layers of mat and plaster. A few traces of coloured pigments on the plaster show that they were painted in green and red.²³ Sami, who excavated Columned Hall ‘F’ in 1950, reports that “signs of fire and scorching and quantities of burnt wood, which had everywhere blackened the walls, made it clear that these buildings also had not escaped the blazing fire, which the young Macedonian king and his associates in their drunken arrogance set alight”.²⁴ The relative absence of precious objects such as gold and silver vessels is a further indication of the intense looting of the city by Alexander’s soldiers. In a short communication in the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris in 1947, Godard talked about the burning of Persepolis as a planned operation:²⁵

Quant à l’incendie de Persépolis, les fouilles prouvent que l’histoire de l’orgie au cours de laquelle Alexandre lui-même poussé par la courtisane Thaïs, aurait mis le feu aux palais, n’est qu’un conte. Persépolis, soigneusement vidé de son contenu par les Grecs, fut ensuite incendié par eux de sang-froid, en représailles du sac d’Athènes par Xerxès.

THE BURNING OF PERSEPOLIS: FACTS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND SPECULATIONS

The question of how and why Alexander decided to destroy Persepolis has been the topic of various, inconclusive discussions. Biruni, the celebrated scientist and geographer of the early eleventh century, who recorded one of the earliest Iranian mentions of the incident, writes that Alexander destroyed the “wonderful architectural monuments, e.g. those in the mountains of Istakhr, nowadays known as the Mosque of Solomon, son of David, and delivered them up to the flames. Peo-

20 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, p. 11.

21 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 222.

22 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 172. It is unfortunate that no C14 analysis was made to determine the absolute date of the burnt beams.

23 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 180.

24 Sami, *Persepolis*, p. 89.

25 Godard, “Le dégagement des Palais de Persépolis (Iran)”, *CRAIB* 91/ 3, p. 551.

ple even say that even today the traces of the fire are visible in some parts”.²⁶ Most of the European travellers who visited Persepolis were convinced of the conflagration and destruction caused by the Macedonian capture of the city as related in Classical sources. Surprisingly, Count Arthur de Gobineau, a Frenchman on his diplomatic mission to Iran in the 1850s, questioned the veracity of the incident.²⁷ Those who did not have a direct knowledge of the site and its ruins, such as the British architect James Fergusson, occasionally attempted to minimize the importance of the Macedonian destruction of the city. Fergusson, whose book is without doubt an excellent treatise on the architecture of Persepolis, states that “there is no evidence of fire at Persepolis, nor any sign of its having been so completely ruined as Quintus Curtius and other authors would lead us to suppose”.²⁸ George Rawlinson, who published the first comprehensive history of the Persian empire, calls the event “the barbarous act of the great Macedonian conqueror”.²⁹ The question would have certainly merited treatment in detail in the latest comprehensive publication of the history of the Achaemenid empire!

Some tried to put this in the context of time. Chardin thought that the Macedonian sack of Persepolis was but the beginning of a series of destructive events that occurred over a long period of time. He attributed the majority of the damages done to the figures and reliefs to the Arab conquerors. The fact that some important manuscripts may have been burnt in the conflagration of the site is reflected in Chardin’s account. He writes that the “Guebres [Zoroastrians] hate Alexander for they take him responsible for burning their sacred

book Avesta”.³⁰ Chardin refers to Anquetil du Perron’s saying in this regard: “Les Ravaets [popular histories] des Perses disent qu’Alexandre brûle en enfer pour avoir condamné au feu les Nosk [texts] de l’Avesta...”.³¹

The burning of Persepolis has always puzzled Classicist historians. They attempted to deal with the question by means of a multitude of speculative interpretations. It is impossible within the limits of the present study to attempt a complete analysis of the various interpretations and theories, but a summary of some of the major trends seems to be called for here. In general, there are two conflicting schools of opinion based on Classical sources: the Vulgate tradition, which goes back to Cleitarchus, and finds itself in Diodorus, Curtius, and Plutarch, takes the event as an accident, the culmination of a drinking party; the other named “official” is based on the histories of Alexander by Ptolemy and Aristoboulos, and is reflected in Arrian’s *Anabasis of Alexander*, according to which the conflagration was an act of policy. Some scholars think that the initial sack of the city and the removal of the treasure, involving a complex logistical plan, indicate that Alexander had decided on the fate of the city from the beginning.³²

In the vulgate version, the burning happened in a drunken orgy, at the instigation of Thais, a courtesan and mistress of Ptolemy. A number of modern historians of Alexander accept this version. For the French historian, Georges Radet, the destruction was a *komôs*, a ritualistic drunken procession performed by revellers in ancient Greece. Radet devoted a whole chapter of his book to the drunken feast, in the course of which the palaces were set on fire.³³

26 Biruni, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, p. 127.

27 Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, pp. 183-184 (see below, chapter VII).

28 Fergusson, *Palaces of Ninevah and Persepolis Restored*, p. 199.

29 Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, vol. 4, p. 233.

30 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 378.

31 Anquetil du Perron, *Zend-Avesta*, vol. 2, p. 338.

32 Fredricksmeyer, “Alexander the Great and the Kingship of Asia”, *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, p. 148. A full historiography is given in Bloedow, “That great puzzle in the history of Alexander”: back into ‘the primal pit of historical murk’”, *Rom und der Griechische Osten*, pp. 24-41; Nawotka, “Alexander the Great in Persepolis”, *AA* 43, pp. 67-76.

33 Radet, *Alexandre le Grand*, p. 189.

La ville royale, où, du temps des Achéménides, se déployaient les pompes de la cour, était donc un cadre merveilleusement approprié aux réjouissances que projetaient les Macédoniens. Nul doute qu'Alexandre, avec son goût inné des magnificences nobles, n'ait choisi l'Esplanade des palais comme théâtre des fêtes commémoratives. Où pouvait-il mieux témoigner sa gratitude aux artisans de ses victoires? Ce fut là, soyons-en sûrs, qu'il remercia les dieux et les hommes. Aux uns, il offrit des sacrifices solennels, aux autres, de splendides festins.

Ces banquets furent multiples. L'un d'eux, très évidemment le dernier, se termina par une crise de folie orgiaстiques dont la singularité déconcerta les moralistes et induit en méfiance les historiens. Pourtant, chez des combattants jeunes, en pleine sève, dont les nerfs et le cerveau ne cessent de se tendre vers des efforts surhumains, que surexcitent tour à tour la menace du péril et l'exaltation du succès, sur qui passent, d'heure en heure, à vagues rapides, l'ombre de la mort et la flamme du plaisir, faut-il s'attendre à trouver la mesure, la sagesse, la possession de soi d'un Socrate?

In his discussion, Radet indicates that there were two rival camps in Alexander's army, one, around Parmenion, in favour of a policy of moderation, the other, following the dogma of Calisthenes, for the "idea of panhellenism devoted to the destruction of the Barbarians".³⁴ If Alexander had ordered the burning of the palaces as a deliberate act of policy, he should not have regretted it almost immediately.³⁵

How could a great figure of ancient history as Alexander commit such an irresponsible act of barbarism in a drunken feast? A more recent view advanced by Edmond Bloedow sheds light on another less explored aspect of the Macedonian conqueror. He writes that Alexander had within him a "barbaric soul" that led him to allow his soldiers to loot the city and smash a number of valuable objects in an act of sheer vandalism; he finally accomplished the operation by setting fire to the buildings.³⁶ Bloedow's thesis, as fascinating as

it may sound, has not gained favour with major historians of Alexander who look for a rational motive to explain the Macedonian's act. Most of them questioned and refuted the authenticity of a drunken feast as being the sole motive for the destruction.

In the early years of the twentieth century, a number of Alexander historians still believed that the burning of Persepolis was an act of vengeance for Xerxes' sack of Athens in 480 B.C. This is why Ulrich Wilcken, a renowned German historian of Alexander wrote in his *Alexander the Great* (published in 1931 in Leipzig) that the burning was "a symbolic act, by which to the listening world and especially to the Greeks it was intended to proclaim in an unparalleled coup de theater that the campaign of vengeance had fulfilled its object".³⁷ The vengeance motive as a Greek cause is now considered unconvincing. If "political revenge was desired, it was more likely to have been exacted from Susa than from Persepolis". Susa was the political and administrative capital of the empire, and "it was there that all those won over by the Hellenic policy of the Great King came to make obeisance: ambassadors, dethroned kings, and discredited politicians".³⁸

Another theory perceives the burning as an act of retaliation against the military resistance at the Persian Gates. This is favoured by Amir-Mehdi Badi who writes in his multi-volume book, *Les Grecs et les Barbares*, that Alexander burnt the palaces at Persepolis "not because he had been drunken and a courtesan had encouraged him to do so, but because, infuriated by the terrible casualties that the heroic satrap of the royal province had inflicted on him, he wanted to appease himself".³⁹

Ernst Badian sees the burning in the context of a war in Greece. A rebellion led by King

34 Radet, *Alexandre le Grand*, p. 190.

35 Hamilton, *Alexander the Great*, p. 89.

36 Bloedow, "That great puzzle in the history of Alexander": back into 'the primal pit of historical murk' ", *Rom und der Griechische Osten*, p. 40.

37 Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, English translation, p. 145.

38 Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 213.

39 Badi, *Les Grecs et les barbares*, vol. 6, part 1, p. 90.

Agis III of Sparta represented the most serious threat yet to the Macedonian dominion. After being years in his march to the East, Alexander received news of the rising in Greece, which worried him. According to Badian's thesis, Alexander stayed four months at Persepolis because he was waiting for the news from Greece. A large part of his army consisted of Greek soldiers, and what was needed was a conspicuous gesture, a forceful reminder to his troops that he was still the leader of the Hellenic crusade. For Badian, Alexander's march to Persepolis was also a strategic error. He should have pursued Darius before the beginning of the winter.⁴⁰ But, one should not forget that the Macedonian conqueror needed Achaemenid treasures to fuel his military machine. Without monetary resources the Hellenic crusaders were unable to advance. So, the capture of Persepolis' treasures was a major step in pursuit of Darius.⁴¹ Thus there was no strategic error. In Badian's opinion the burning of Persepolis happened because of the lack of news from Europe, and the realization that time was wasted while Darius recovered his strength.⁴² Badian's interpretation of the burning as an act of policy and as a sign to the Greeks that he was still fighting for their cause poses chronological problems. Agis lost his life before the battle of Gaugamela, some eight months before the burning of Persepolis, and the news must have reached Alexander well before his arriving at Persepolis regardless the speed of communication in the late fourth century B.C. Any attempt to influence the outcome of war in Greece would have been unnecessary. Moreover, the need to send a message to Greece and/or to other territories of the Per-

sian empire could not have been so urgent as to justify the risk of turning away from the Persian nobility in the heart of the Empire. This is why Badian's thesis has been refuted by a number of scholars.⁴³

In 1833, Johann Gustave Droysen, the famous Prussian historian of Alexander, published his idealized history of Alexander the Great (*Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*), in which he presented an interesting point of view. He states that the burning of the palaces was a premeditated act, and that Alexander looked forward to hearing back from Darius in response to the propositions that he had made in the aftermath of the battle of Issus. According to Droysen, the Macedonian conqueror sought to establish a long-term peace with the condition that Darius formally recognized his rule over Asia. Alexander waited months for such a response. Darius being persistent in his silence, Alexander finally decided to strike and to show "conquered Asia that the Achaemenid power had been annihilated forever."⁴⁴ As a result, Alexander's men were "ordered to set fire to the wooden parts of the palace... Part of the palace was burnt down. Then the king ordered to extinguish the fire".⁴⁵ Droysen's view brought about two novelties in the history of Alexander in connection with the burning of Persepolis: 1) Alexander sought to be recognized as an Achaemenid king; 2) the conflagration destroyed only a part of the palaces, and was a reaction to Darius' silence towards Alexander's propositions, which can be interpreted as a Persian resistance to the recognition of Alexander as an Achaemenid king.

40 Badian, "Agis III", *Hermes* 95/2, p. 188.

41 Borza examines in detail the capture and transportation of the treasure in "Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis", *CP* 67/4, p. 239.

42 Borza, "Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis", *CP* 67/4, p. 189; Badian, "Alexander in Iran", *CHI*, vol. 2, pp. 445-446.

43 Borza, "Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis", *CP* 67/4, p. 238; Briant, *Rois, tributs et paysans*, p. 73, and note 307; Briant, *HPE*, p. 1073; Bloedow, "That great puzzle in the history of Alexander", *Rom und der Griechische Osten*, pp. 28-29; Nawotka, "Alexander the Great at Persepolis", *AA* 43, pp. 70-71.

44 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*, pp. 293-294.

45 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*, p. 291.

The theme of a Persian resistance has been fully developed and discussed by Pierre Briant in a thoughtful article.⁴⁶ Classical sources tell us that there was a lapse of four months between the capture of the city and the burning of the palaces. According to Briant, the fact that the burning took place at the end of Alexander's stay bespeaks his reluctance to torch the palaces. Alexander's arrival in the royal city in January 330 offered him the occasion of materializing his main objective: to receive the royal investiture in much the same way as had the Persian kings. It is possible that he even had the intention of celebrating the Persian New Year at Persepolis. Briant believes that it is in a Persian context that one should interpret Alexander's decision. Persis or Fars constituted the heart of the empire, where the imperial ideology of the empire was formed. If Alexander had been able to grasp the meaning of the inscriptions on the walls of the palaces and on the façades of the royal tombs, he might have understood that Persia and Persian people of all times had always had a privileged relation with the dynasty. The inscriptions of Darius the Great, particularly those engraved on his tomb, urge readers to defend this country of Persia against enemies and lies. This was the "mission that the great king Darius assigned on those, who, before being Great king and King of kings, were Persian, son of Persian, king of Persia".⁴⁷ From one Darius to another, adds Briant, the royal mission as well as the central position of Persia remained unchanged. For four months Alexander sought in vain the legitimacy required for becoming the king of Persia. His expedition to the northern parts of Persia, to Pasargadae in particular, aimed at gaining a certain prestige by attaching himself to the legacy and deeds of

Cyrus the Great. Here Briant speculates that Alexander, being aware of the shift of power from Cyrus to Darius, sought to "impose the idea that the Macedonian conquest would allow the restoration of the lineage of Cyrus the Great". His quest for legitimacy was an insurmountable problem stemming from the impossibility of relating himself by blood to the Achaemenid family. His visit to Pasargadae was an act of last resort to gain the support of the Persian population. His policy of persuasion failed. Persian nobles and dignitaries being apparently unable to reach a consensus to recognize him as king, Alexander's frustration was finally materialized in the burning of Persepolis.⁴⁸ Briant's view has been shared by Josef Wieshöfer and Krzysztof Nawotka.⁴⁹

A similar theory is proposed by Jack Balcer who examines the question from an opposite point of view. For him, Alexander usurped the Achaemenid throne without gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the Persians. Alexander destroyed the palaces at Persepolis in order to obtain the sovereignty of the Persian Empire's territories. To justify his act, Alexander then "proclaimed – as we are told by Classical writers, that the burning of Persepolis was a retribution for Xerxes' destruction of Athens".⁵⁰ Ernst Fredricksmeier thinks that the destruction of Persepolis was "in accord with Alexander's proclamation as King of Asia at Arbela, as a clear signal that his own kingship was not a continuation or renewal of the Persian kingship, but superseded it, not by grace of Ahuramazda, but by his own prowess, and the grace of the Graeco-Macedonian god".⁵¹

Some scholars, following Heinz Luschey, wrote that the invaders set fire to those buildings that bore the name of Xerxes. Luschey wrote in 1968 that if Alexander had known of

46 Briant, *Rois, tributs et paysans*, pp. 391-399. Briant, who discusses Droysen's other views on the Persian empire, does not seem to mention the German historian's opinion on the subject (see Briant, *Alexander the Great and His Empire: A Short Introduction*, pp. 83, 96-97).

47 Briant, *Lettre ouverte à Alexandre le Grand*, p. 86.

48 Briant, *Alexander the Great*, p. 111.

49 Wieshöfer, *Die 'dunklen Jahrhunderte' der Persis*, pp. 40-41; Nawotka, "Alexander the Great in Persepolis", *AA* 43, p. 75.

50 Balcer, "Alexander's burning of Persepolis", *IA* 13, p. 113.

51 Fredricksmeier, "Alexander the Great and the Kingship of Asia", *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, p. 149.

the existence of the Foundation tablets of the Apadana bearing the name of Darius, he would have behaved differently.⁵² If the Macedonian conqueror had known where to search for Darius' Foundation tablets in the Apadana, he would have melted down the gold and silver documents in order to feed his military expeditions. The theory that the conflagration targeted only some specific constructions or Xerxes' buildings on the Terrace was favoured by Ernst Badian, Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, and Josef Wiesehöfer.⁵³ The latter writes that Alexander had no plan for the destruction of the entire city, and argues against the motive of retaliation for Persian resistance.⁵⁴ He interprets Alexander's stay in Persia as a "proof of his effort not to mark an 'interruption' in the reign of his predecessors, but by recognizing Persian grandeur and observing the country's traditions, to win over to his side the Persian aristocracy and the population as a whole".⁵⁵ This is an idea initially proposed by Gerhard Wirth.⁵⁶ There is no substantial evidence to support such a claim; nor does Alexander's behaviour at the time of the capture of the city show any sign of such a policy. The sack and burning of Persepolis could not have been interpreted in any other way than a deliberate attempt to destroy the cradle of the Persian Empire. A large number of documents

were equally destroyed during the capture of the city.⁵⁷ Peukestas's rule over Persia, given as an argument in favour of a pro-Persian policy of Alexander – cannot be assigned to Alexander's four-month stay in the region. Fifteen years separates the destruction of Persepolis and the festivity organized at Persepolis by Peukestas in 317 or 316 BC.⁵⁸

Following a new reassessment of the early phases of the history of the Achaemenid empire, both Briant and Wiesehöfer interpret Alexander's visit to Pasargadae as an attempt to take a stand for the lineage of Cyrus the Great as opposed to Darius I.⁵⁹ Alexander burnt Persepolis because he "sought to obliterate the memory of Xerxes and also to prevent potential rivals from taking possession of the valuable objects and treasures accumulated there".⁶⁰ This opinion, based on the idea that only the buildings with the name of Xerxes were chosen to be set to fire, is to be rejected for the simple fact that there is not a single building at Persepolis that does not bear the name of that king. Persepolis is essentially the work of Xerxes. Moreover, it is unthinkable that by destroying the magnificent monuments of Achaemenid kings in the centre of the empire, Alexander's policy to "win over to his side the Persian aristocracy" could have any meaning at all. The idea behind all these

52 Luschej, "Iran und der Westen", *AMI* 1, pp. 28-29.

53 Badian, "Alexander in Iran", *CHI*, vol. 2, p. 447; Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Alexander and Persepolis", *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth*, pp. 181-182; Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, p. 106. Wiesehöfer's raising doubt on the existence of archaeological facts for the destruction of Persepolis is astonishing: "The idea of the 'destruction' of the place by Alexander is a literary device – the place as the symbol of Persian hegemony had to 'perish' as the conclusion of the punitive campaign – and has not been confirmed by archaeological research (*Ancient Persia*, p. 25).

54 Wiesehöfer, *Die 'dunklen Jahrhunderte' der Persis*, p. 39.

55 Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, p. 106.

56 Wirth, "Alexander zwischen Gaugamela und Persepolis", *Historia* 20/5-6, p. 624.

57 Shahbazi, "Iranians and Alexander", *AJAH* 2/1, pp. 20-21.

58 Wiesehöfer, "Fars under Seleucid and Parthian rule", *The Idea of Iran: Age of the Parthians*, p. 38.

59 Briant, *Rois, tribute et paysans*, p. 392; Wiesehöfer, *Die 'dunklen Jahrhunderte' der Persis*, p. 39. The "revisionist" interpretation that questions the veracity of Darius's sayings in his inscriptions at Bisutun emanates from a view that authentic ancient sources can be discarded for sensationalist reconstructions. The issue has been fully dealt with in, at least, three publications: A. Sh. Shahbazi, "A new picture of the Achaemenid World, a review of Pierre Briant's *From Cyrus to Alexander*", *NIB*, pp. 78-79; F. Vallat, "Cyrus l'usurpateur", *Topoi*, supplement 1, pp. 430-431; "Darius le grand roi", *Le Palais de Darius à Suse*, pp. 57-62.

60 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Alexander and Persepolis", *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth*, p. 181. According to her theory, the contents of the palaces and not the buildings were the object of the Macedonian's torch. The important and valuable contents of the Treasury and other buildings had been cleared weeks before the burning. A few long curtains and furniture certainly served as combustibles to burn down the palaces.

interpretations is to minimize the actual fact – that is, the burning of the city. As a wanton act of barbarism of which even Arrian could not approve, or an act of policy to nullify a Greek revolt in Europe, or an act of rage and retaliation for a Persian resistance, the burning of Persepolis not only deprived Alexander of legitimacy in Asia, but also ensured the development of a long lasting Iranian resistance to Hellenism, which reached its peak under the Sasanians. The “official” version was put out later to account for an action of which Alexander was bitterly ashamed in the aftermath.⁶¹

Jakob Seibert, the German Classicist and historian of Alexander, has recently put forward another interesting revisionist theory: Alexander did not burn Persepolis. According to Seibert the whole story of the fire was a Greek invention. Greek historians invented the panhellenic motive and the vengeance for Xerxes’ destruction of the Acropolis in Athens, but in reality the Macedonians did not fight for a Greek cause.⁶² He argues that the conflagration was accidental, and that in absence of absolute datings for the burned remains found in the excavations, the traces of burning could be dated to later periods.⁶³ Seibert thinks that that Callisthenes, Alexander’s Greek historian, included the fire in analogy with the burying of the Acropolis by the Persians.⁶⁴ In Georges Radet’s eloquent words Callisthenes attempts to portrait the Macedonian conqueror as Homeric heroes:⁶⁵

Héroïser l’histoire, couler une fois de plus les exploits du nouvel Achille dans le moule de l’*Illiade*, dresser le vieux château achéménide comme un pendant à la Troie homérique, assimiler l’incendie du kiosque de Xerxès à celui du palais de Priam, montrer dans ce châtimeut infligé par Dionysos une dernière revanche de l’Europe sur l’Asie, c’était là une affabulation entièrement conforme à la mystique de l’Olynthien. Il ne dut pas négliger un canevas si riche et la métamorphose de Pârsa en Persépolis fut, je pense, son chant du cygne.

The first destruction of Persepolis can be summarized as follows: The Macedonian army plundered the City of Persians in the winter of 330 B.C. They carefully cleaned the Treasury of its valuable treasures. Alexander also visited Pasargadae, probably not for “honouring the tomb or memory of Cyrus the Great” but to appropriate the royal treasures housed at the old capital city of the empire (Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, III, 18, 10).⁶⁶ His four-month stay at the site, I think, was for a pragmatic reason. The removal of Achaemenid treasures and preparation of them for transportation may have taken weeks. He wanted to take part of the treasures with him to cover the expenses of the war, and to deposit the rest in Susa and keep it under guard. This is why he sent for a large number of pack and harness animals (horses, mules, donkeys, camels) from Babylonia and Susa to transport everything to the desired places (Diodorus, XVII, 71, 1-2). Given the fact that all this took place in the winter, the army had to wait to receive pack animals from different regions.

61 Hamilton, *Alexander the Great*, p. 89. It is true that there are testimonies pointing to cultural contacts between Greeks and Iranians in Iran, of which one can mention the *Alexander Romance* translated into Middle Persian. The Iranian variants include *A’ine-ye Eskandari* by Amir Khosrow Dehlavi (1253-1325) and the fifteenth-century poetic work *Kheradnāmeḥ-ye Eskandari* by Abd ar-Rahman Jami, who takes Nezami’s *Eqbāl-nāmeḥ* as his model, presenting a fully Iranicized Alexander, as well as the anonymous work of prose *Eskandarnāmeḥ*. Wiesehöfer argues that the image of Alexander the “adventurer” prevailed in the course of centuries as reflected in the Persian literature before changing to Alexander “the accursed” in the twentieth century when Iranian scholars and authors began to rediscover Alexander *gizistag* of the Zoroastrian tradition (Wiesehöfer, “The ‘accursed’ and the ‘adventurer’: Alexander the Great in Iranian tradition”, forthcoming).

62 Seibert, “Alexander der Grosse in Persepolis (Takht-e Jamšīd)”, *Iranistik* 3/2, pp. 93-94.

63 Seibert, “Alexander der Grosse in Persepolis (Takht-e Jamšīd)”, *Iranistik* 3/2, pp. 88-90.

64 Idem., p. 99.

65 Radet, *Alexandre le Grand*, pp. 198-199.

66 Wiesehöfer thinks that the undoubtedly apocryphal Greek inscription on the Tomb of Cyrus mentioned in the Alexander tradition is a particularly interesting example of the Greek world’s admiration for Cyrus on the one hand, and Greek interpretation of foreign ways of life on the other (*Ancient Persia*, p. 12).

Besides, the road to the north – to Ecbatana, where Darius had his headquarters, was particularly difficult during the cold season. Whether during his stay in Persia Alexander sought to win over the Persian population or to receive the legitimacy of an Achaemenid king – I believe – had no effect on the destiny of Persepolis.⁶⁷

The story of a drinking party may well have found some ground even if we consider the destruction as an act of policy. Francis Bradley-Birt writing in 1919 has eloquently summarized the incident:⁶⁸

It may have been thus, in drunken mood, as many historians relate, urged on by Thais the courtesan, that the order went forth to burn and destroy, the conqueror himself leading the mad orgy, torch in hand, to lay in ruins that city the like of which even he, with all his triumphs, could not build. Or it may be that deliberately and of set design he destroyed this capital that was the very pride and glory of the Achaemenian kings, intending thereby to impress upon the people whom he had subdued that a greater than they had come to rule over them. Over that last scene there lies a veil that no historian has lifted. Yet, whether of wanton caprice or set design, it is difficult to forgive the conqueror who made so poor a conquest of himself.

The operation marked the departure of the troops and the culmination of Alexander's conquests, as Sir Mortimer Wheeler portrays it with his Victorian plume:

Let us then accept the likelihood that the last party in Xerxes' palace was a good one, and that at its climax the retrospect of Xerxes himself amidst the smoking ruins of Attica was an excusable irritant memory. The touch added by Plutarch – the nostalgic hope on the part of some of those present that the burning would mark the ultimate limit of the Asian enterprise – fits likewise into the picture.⁶⁹

SUBSEQUENT DESTRUCTIONS OF PERSEPOLIS

Regarding the question of how the site of Persepolis reached its present state of conservation, a number of factors need to be considered. The most destructive element is, without doubt, time which not only brings about decay, but also creates a framework in which the second factor, the destructive power of humans, can operate. The first destruction of Persepolis took place with the Macedonian capture and sack of the city in 330 B.C. Not much information is available on the succeeding centuries. It seems that some buildings on or outside the Terrace were in relatively safe state of preservation to be used either as offices or temporary residences. From the Arab invasion, presumably, date the first deliberate mutilation and defacement of sculptures. Moreover, as Curzon reminds us, the moderns, too, have borne their share in the destructive campaign. For centuries local population and rulers carried off hundreds of architectural elements and building materials from the ruins for architectural reuse or burning in lime kilns. The remains at Istakhr or Qasr-e Abunahr are the well known examples of such a trend.⁷⁰ A number of European visitors report that Shah Abbas had pieces of marble carried off from the site for his palaces and mosques; and that Imam Quli Khan, the celebrated governor of Fars, did the same for his capital in Shiraz; and that a local governor of Shiraz under Shah Safi, revolted by the number of Europeans who visited the ruins, and for whose expenses he was required to pay, sent a party of sixty men with orders to destroy every sculpture upon which they could lay hands (see below, chapter IV).⁷¹ A large

67 Alexander may have attempted to present himself as the legitimate heir to the Achaemenid throne but everything he did towards that goal lacked sincerity (see Shahbazi, "Iranians and Alexander", *AJAH* 2/1, pp. 24-25).

68 Bradley-Birt, *Persia: through Persia from the Gulf to the Caspian*, p. 216.

69 Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis*, p. 28.

70 Godard, "Persépolis. Le Tachara", *Syria* 28, p. 68.

71 The story was told by the Capucine Friars residing in Isfahan. Bembo who visited the ruins in 1674 reports that when the king learned about the destructive operation, "he sent out an absolute command to suspend the undertaking that had only been carried out in part" (Bembo, *Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo*, p. 311).

number of sculptures were used as targets for deliberate shooting by both government troops and armed brigands throughout the Qajar period (fig. 2.1). Such acts of vandalism were only halted by the beginning of systematic excavation of the ruins in 1931. The European visitors who reported such operations of vandalism were, in turn, themselves responsible for the partial destruction of architectural decorations of the monuments. In this regard, let us quote Lord Curzon, a traveller of the Victorian age, who writes:⁷²

Nor do I feel altogether happy – for the credit of these self-same Europeans – when I read in the pages of Le Brun that he took a mason from Shiraz, and blunted all his tools, in the effort to break off and carry away desirable fragments, and that he confesses to having shattered several figures in pieces. Perhaps we may seek relief from such remorse in the fact that on the 1,200 sculptured figures, reported by that traveller to have existed in his day, only a small impression ever has been or can be produced by these pretty depredations. A thousand years hence our descendants will still find ample cause both for pilgrimage and for marvel in the monuments of Persepolis.

Subsequently, travellers such as Curzon can be blamed for scratching their names on the structures at Persepolis. To be recognized and different from other names, Curzon engraved his name in italic on the Gate of All Lands and for this became criticized by another celebrated visitor of Persepolis, Ernst Herzfeld, who noted in 1923 in his diary:⁷³

The Orientals are all profoundly impressed, and that manifests itself in prayers and poems about the transitory nature and vanity of the world. The Europeans are all alike: I, with all titles, the great man, was here. Framed and underlined and – from such tremendous snobs as Curzon – written in italics, underlined and framed. How inferior [to the Orientals]!

The majestic desolation and calm of the ruins were disturbed with the beginning of indus-

trialization in Iran in the 1920s. The region witnessed an unprecedented increase of population after the government built a sugar factory in 1935 in the plain of Marvdasht. It is how the town of Marvdasht was founded with an amalgam of people leaving nearby villages or abandoning nomadic life to settle in the growing city. The development of industries in the region flourished during the 1960s and 1970s with other polluting factories such as the petrochemical complex and a large branch of Azmāyesh (producing household appliances based in Tehran and intended to be the biggest in the Middle East). Marvdasht is the second most populated city in Fars.⁷⁴ The small village near Persepolis was razed in 1970, and the “modern” village of Sherkat-e Zerā’i was created two km south-east of Persepolis. The village was meant to be the exemplar of a modernized agricultural centre in the developing rural area of Marvdasht. An asphalt road was constructed along the western edge of the Terrace for the 2500th anniversary of Iranian monarchy. The road destroyed a number of remains. The continuous industrialization and the reckless development of tourism in the area adjacent to Persepolis have created encroachments that endanger the site and its archaeological components.

In the summer of 2011, following the government’s decision to relocate administrative bodies outside the capital, some of the departments within the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, including the Centre for Archaeological Research, were transferred to Isfahan and Shiraz. The administrative and research offices of the ICAR were moved to Persepolis. According to the authorities, the archaeological importance of the area justifies the relocation of the ICAR. It is still hard to assess the impact of such a reorganization on the archaeological site of Persepolis.

72 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, pp. 188-189.

73 Herzfeld Archive, Notebook 84, 84-85, translated into English and published in E. Dusinger, “Herzfeld in Persepolis”, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 143.

74 The information has been gleaned from [www. http://marvdashtonline.ir](http://marvdashtonline.ir).

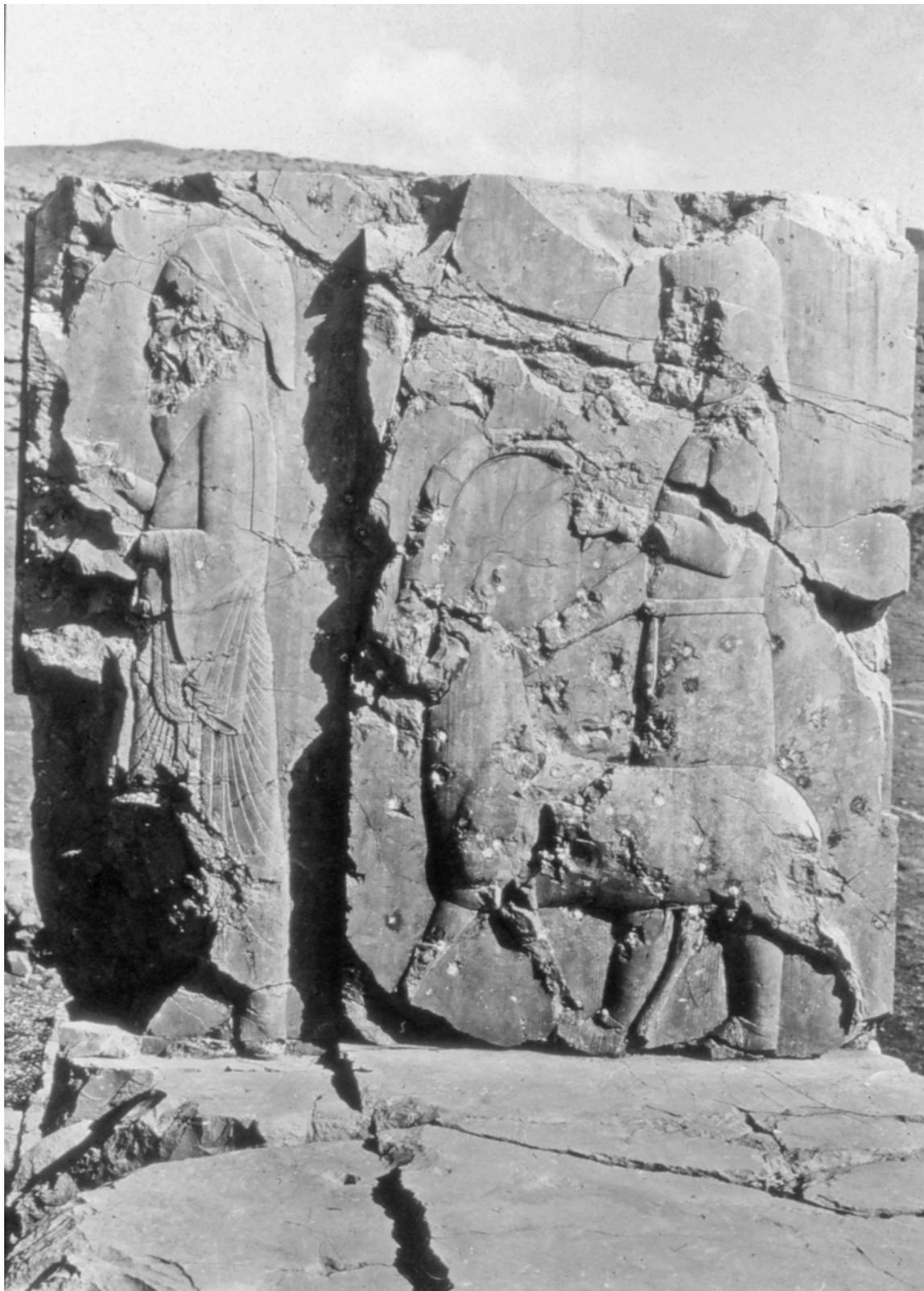


FIG. 2.1 Palace of Xerxes (Hadish). Damaged bas-relief of a servant with an ibex on a stone windowframe in the southern wall used as a target for shooting (Photo © Ernst Herzfeld Papers, the Archives of the Freer and Sackler, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.).

III

FROM PARSA TO SAD-SOTUN: THE AFTERLIFE OF PERSEPOLIS BEGINS

The course that led to the transformation of the historical site of Persepolis into a mythical place of fascination is still a mystery. How could a site of such an importance fall into oblivion? After Persepolis was plundered, destroyed, and abandoned in 330 B.C., the Takht became a place of fascination, evoking a glorious past of spiritual and mythological associations rather than literalistic historical recollections. A few decades after the fall of the empire local rulers seem to have reoccupied a limited area of the south-west quadrant of the Terrace. Nevertheless, no attempt was made to rebuild the place or to reuse it either as a working administrative centre or as the routinely used residence for dynastic rituals and royal ceremonies. Apart from the site being mentioned on the occasion of Alexander's conquest, there is only one more reference to Persepolis after the defeat of Antigonos by Eumenes in 316 B.C. A passage by Diodorus relates that Peukestas, the trusted officer whom Alexander had appointed as his administrator in Persis, organized a grand festivity in honour of Eumenes in an immense camp of tents (Diodorus XIX. 22.2–3). As Herzfeld rightly reminds us, the camp would not have been necessary if Persepolis was not burnt, "for the great Apadana alone could easily have held six thousand persons".¹ On or below the Terrace, the banquet participants were grouped according to their rank into four concentric circles around the place of sacrifice, with the inner circle as the place of Macedonian generals and those Persians who were most honoured. This sort of sacrificial ceremony and seating order were in accordance with Achaemenid custom; the hierarchy of the seating order reflected the proximity to

and the distance from the ruler represented on the reliefs of Persepolis.² The ruins did indeed occasionally function as settings for the affirmation of continuity with more ancient traditions, as well as for symbolic practices of kingship and religious observance in the Persian heartland.

Shortly afterward, Eumenes was killed in another battle against Antigonos near Isfahan. Antigonos visited Persepolis, deposed Peukestas and his supporters, and appointed a certain Asklepidorus. This is the last mention of Persepolis before it disappears from Greek sources, which indicate that after Asklepidorus it was no longer ruled by Greek satraps.³

PERSEPOLIS IN THE "DARK AGE" OF FARS

Unlike the old capital of the empire, Susa, where traces of reoccupation of the site after the Achaemenids have been found in the course of excavations, very few material remains have survived from the years that immediately followed the destruction of Persepolis in 330 B.C. We can guess that the ruined buildings were partly reused occasionally, and that the settlement, if any, was reserved to the surrounding plain below the stone platform. Construction activities on and below the Terrace have been recognized from the post-Achaemenid period but we do not know whether they took place during the years following the capture of the city, or much later at the time of the local rulers of Fars. The relatively limited number of finds in the excavation of monumental buildings on the Terrace does not indicate any clear post-Achaemenid

1 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 46.

2 Wiesehöfer, "Fars under Seleucid and Parthian rule", *The Idea of Iran: the Age of the Parthians*, pp. 38-39.

3 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 46.

reoccupation, even in those constructions with small units such as the Treasury or the Harem of Xerxes. Some scholars have pointed out that at the time of the major excavations in the 1930s, the post-Achaemenid materials could not be distinguished from those of the preceding period.⁴ It is true that distinguishing between Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid ceramics has not always been easy for archaeologists, and has barely helped the elucidation of archaeological sequence at Achaemenid sites. In the careful publication of finds from Persepolis, however, there is almost no sign of a significant body of objects which can be dated to the post-Achaemenid period. Moreover, we are told by Classical authors that Persepolis was left to the mercy of Macedonian looters, and that Alexander himself took all the treasures stored in the citadel. The largely damaged and burnt buildings on the Terrace were unlikely to be reused for a long period of time after 330 B.C.

Remnants of construction and reuse of structural and decorative elements from various locations at the site of the so-called Palace 'H' bear witness to some construction activities on the Terrace.⁵ The exploration of the area revealed that upon a high rocky platform between the Tripylon and the Apadana, the Tachara, and northern courtyard of the Hadish, there was a structure known as Palace 'G' with thick mud-brick walls on all but its southern side. The access to the building was made possible by means of a double-winged staircase, which was decorated on its façade with reliefs of Persian guards facing an inscription in the middle, and on its inner walls with

figures of servants carrying provisions. After the fall of the Achaemenids, the staircase was dismantled and its fragments were reused in the area to the south of the Palace of Darius. The alterations in this area of the Terrace have also been attributed to a later period of time.⁶

The earliest remains firmly dated to the post-Achaemenid period are those of an architectural complex, three hundred metres to the north-west of the Persepolis Terrace, the construction of which may have begun as early as the late fourth century B.C. During his comprehensive survey of Persepolis and its surroundings made at the request of the Iranian government in 1923, Herzfeld briefly explored the architectural remains which he was able to excavate some ten years later.⁷ Herzfeld called the building the Fratadara Temple, and identified it as an "entirely Iranian" temple. He attributed the construction to the dynasty of the local rulers of Istakhr, and put forward the idea that a national party came to power soon after Asklepidorus, sometime before 300 B.C.⁸ Five Greek inscriptions with the names of Zeus Megistos Athena Basileia, Appolon, Artemis, and Helios were found during the excavation of the remains in 1932. Of these votive inscriptions, engraved on stone tablets measuring 30 × 10 centimetres, only three have been read and studied.⁹ The style of writing of these Greek inscriptions has been attributed to the early Hellenistic period, and some scholars believe that they were inscribed at the time of Peukestas.¹⁰ The complex itself consists of two distinct parts: a north-eastern building with a columned hall, and a south-western area with two reliefs on

4 Boucharlat, "Le destin des résidences et sites perses d'Iran dans la seconde moitié du IV^e siècle avant J.-C.," *Persika* 9, p. 455.

5 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, pp. 274–275.

6 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, pp. 243–316, esp. 315–16.

7 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis", *AMI*, vol. 1, 1929, p. 33. The excavation results were never published in full, but a summary has been given by Schmidt in *Persepolis I*, p. 56.

8 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 46.

9 The inscriptions conserved in the Oriental Institute in Chicago were first mentioned by Herzfeld in *Iran in the Ancient East*, p. 275. They were then studied by Louis Robert ("Encore une inscription grecque de l'Iran", *CRAI* 111/2, pp. 281–297). Three of them have recently been re-examined and published by George Rougemont, "Les inscriptions grecques de l'Iran", *Dossiers d'Archéologie*, pp. 6–7.

10 Wiesehöfer, "Fars under Seleucid and Parthian rule", *The Idea of Iran: the Age of the Parthians*, p. 39.

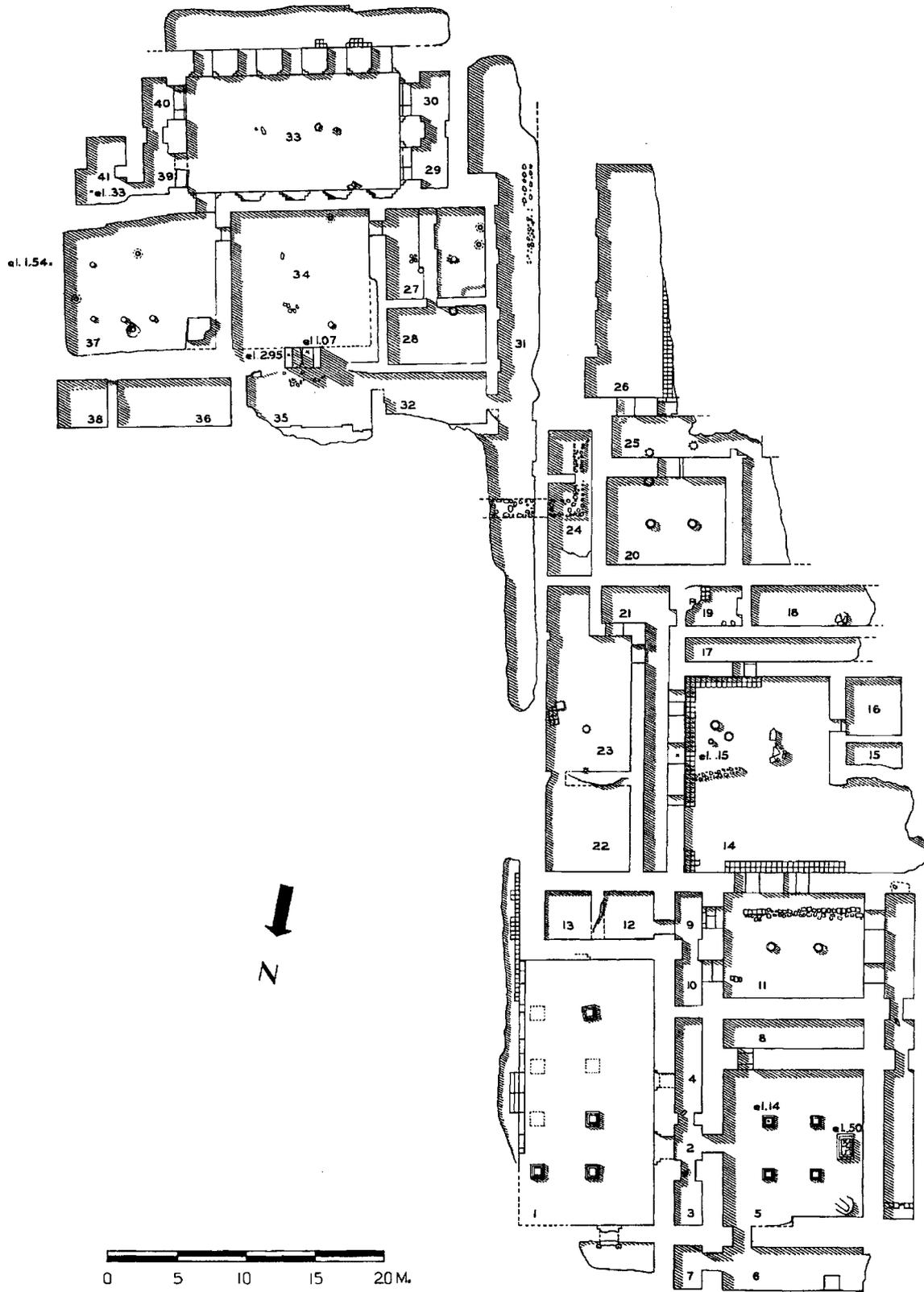


FIG. 16. PLAN OF POST-ACHAEMENID FRATADARA TEMPLE NORTHWEST OF PERSEPOLIS TERRACE. SCALE, 1:300

FIG. 3.1 Plan of the Fratadara complex excavated by Herzfeld (after Schmidt).

the jambs of the stone doorway (fig. 3.1). The plan of the north-eastern area shows similarities with the plan of the buildings in the Southern plain. The bell-shaped column bases of the north-eastern part may have been taken from the Achaemenid buildings on or below the Terrace, whereas the three-stepped bases in Room 5 were probably made specifically for the purpose of the building in question. The stone pedestal interpreted first by Herzfeld as a fire altar is now considered to be the base of a statue erected in the main hall of the north-western building.¹¹ A number of domestic objects were found in the excavation, such as pottery vessels and small stone tools, which had mostly been salvaged from the ruined buildings on the Terrace.¹² Herzfeld carelessly excavated a hoard of coins at the Fratadara Temple, which he never published. The hoard in question consists of tetradrachms of Seleucus I, and some early Persis rulers.¹³ Besides, there is no information on the archaeological context in which the inscribed plaques and coins were found.¹⁴ Based on the style of the reliefs and their analogy with coins related to the local rulers of Fars, the south-eastern part is dated to the second and first centuries B.C. Herzfeld believed that the complex was not a Greek temple but “one that was used for the worship of

the old gods”. He writes that there is a “syncretistic use of the names for the gods: Zeus Megistos instead of Ormuzd, Appolon and Helios for Mithra, Artemis and Athena for Anahita”.¹⁵

By the last decade of the fourth century B.C., Persia, the heartland of the Achaemenid empire, may have been known under the name of Persis, and may have become semi-independent by c. 280 B.C. under native rulers who claimed descent from the Achaemenids, and bore the title *frātārākā* (hereafter *frataraka*). Earlier scholars, such as Herzfeld, thought that name meant Guardians of the Fire.¹⁶ The reading, bearing a religious connotation, was rejected later, and now the name of the dynasty is translated as *frataraka* that roughly means “chief” or “governor”. The difficulty in reading the legend is due to the fact that the letter forms, written in a script derived from Aramaic, are open to multiple interpretations.¹⁷ The association of the buildings excavated by Herzfeld with some religious function is quite possible, and that is why he named the Temple of Keepers of the Fire. We may exceptionally keep this title for the complex, and reserve the more commonly used term *frataraka* for the historical dynasty that once ruled the region of Persepolis. The *frataraka* dynasts gradually broke away from the Seleucids.

11 See the recent discussion by Callieri, “Some notes on the so-called Temple of the Fratarakas”, *Studi in onore Umberto Scerrato*, vol. 1, p. 159; Boucharlat, “Le destin des résidences et sites perses d’Iran”, *Persika* 9, p. 453.

12 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 56.

13 Nobody has ever seen the coins in question. The so-called study of these coins by Edward T. Newell, who gives erroneous information about the date and place of the discovery, is useless (Newell, *The Coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints*, pp. 159-161). Ghirshman is right in criticizing Newell (*Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Nechandeh et Masjid-i Soleiman*, p. 201, note 5). Some of these coins unfortunately disappeared from the gallery in the Iran Bastan Museum in a theft in 1991. A photograph recently published by Vesta Sarkhosh-Curtis is the only visual document of that unique hoard of coins (Curtis, “The Frataraka coins of Persis: bridging the gap between Achaemenid and Sasanian Persia”, *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, pp. 383-385, fig. 35.6).

14 Ghirshman, *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Nechandeh et Masjid-i Soleiman*, vol. 1, p. 201, note 7. For a discussion, see Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ des Persis*, pp. 73-74, and notes 226-228.

15 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 275. His opinion has also been supported by Wiesehöfer.

16 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 47; *IAE*, p. 275.

17 For a full discussion, see Naster, “Notes d’épigraphie monétaire de Perside: fratakara, frataraka ou fratarā?” *IA* 8, pp. 74-80; Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ der Persis*, pp. 106-108. For more details on the occurrence of the term *fratarak* in Aramaic documents, see Skjaervo, “The joy of the cup: a Pre-Sasanian Middle Persian inscription on a silver bowl”, *BAI* 11, p. 102; and Potts, “Foundation houses, fire altars and the Frataraka”, *IA* 42, p. 272.

Their Iranian names, minted on their coins as Baydād, Vahubarz, Ardashir, and Vadfrādād, show a continuity of Persian traditions during the “Dark Age” of Fars. The iconography of their coins shows close ties to Achaemenid art, but they did not claim authority outside the borders of Persis.¹⁸ It should be noted here that none of these coins has been found in the controlled excavations at Persepolis or Istakhr.¹⁹ The earliest excavated Persis coins from Istakhr date to the first century after Christ.²⁰ Moreover, none of the Persis coins bears the mint-name, and it is surprising to see some scholars repeatedly using Persepolis or Istakhr as the main places where the coins were produced.²¹

The south-eastern additions to the complex have been now dated to the time of the local dynasts.²² This part of the building has a large, rectangular hall with five openings on the south side. To the north of this hall is located a square hall with a window on its north side. On the stone jambs of that window, there are poorly preserved figures of a ruler and his queen. Herzfeld identified the figure as one of the first *frataraka* of Istakhr, whose rule began shortly after 300 B.C.²³ The figure has his right hand raised, and his left hand holds the *barsom* (the sacred wand) in an attitude of praying. On the opposite jamb, there is the figure of a queen, the only known representation of a woman at Persepolis, a subject that is strictly avoided in official Achaemenid art. Her attitude is the same as the other figure (fig. 3.2). The art of the figures is far from the

highly refined reliefs of Persepolis, and indicates a decline in the art of bas-reliefs before its ultimate revival under the Sasanians. Besides, by comparing the plan of the Fratadara Temple with that of Bard-e Neshandeh, Ghirshman questions the strange position of the reliefs placed as a window in a mud-brick building in a way that one could barely see them. He thinks that the female figure depicts Anahita, and the scene represents a local prince engaged in an act of sacrifice in front of the deity.²⁴

There is no evidence of an urban life in the excavated buildings of the Southern plain after the fall of the Achaemenids. Further excavations in that direction, however, may reveal traces of later reoccupation or construction activities.²⁵ The governing seat of the local dynasts must have shifted from Persepolis to the nearby site of Istakhr in the course of time. Persepolis sank into oblivion, and its history before Alexander became entirely unknown. In terms of active urban life, the city of Istakhr gained preponderance as has been shown by a limited number of soundings which revealed architectural elements from the third and second centuries B.C.²⁶ From now on, all the references to the ruins at Persepolis are to be associated with the city of Istakhr. Studies on the history of Fars from the fall of the Achaemenids until the advent of the Sasanians show that the region of southern Iran was independent at times. The Parthians often left the local dynasts in office with the right to mint coins as long as they remained loyal to the Arsacid

18 Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran*, p. 272; Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ der Persis*, pp. 99–139.

19 Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, pp. clx-clxxxii, and 195–244, pls. 28–37.

20 Miles, *Excavation Coins from the Persepolis Region*, pp. 19–21.

21 Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, p. clx, note 3.

22 Callieri, *L’archéologie du Fars*, pp. 54–56.

23 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 286, pl. 66.

24 Ghirshman, *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Nechandeh and Masjid-i Soleiman*, vol. 1, p. 202.

25 An Irano-Italian team has recently explored the area surrounding the Terrace of Persepolis. No report has been yet published (for the news, see http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=183888).

26 Herzfeld never published a full account of his excavations at Istakhr, but he mentions the finds in his *IAE*, pp. 276–281; his unpublished notes and photographs which are preserved in the archives of the Freer Gallery, in Washington D.C., indicate the importance of his discoveries, which deserve to be properly published.

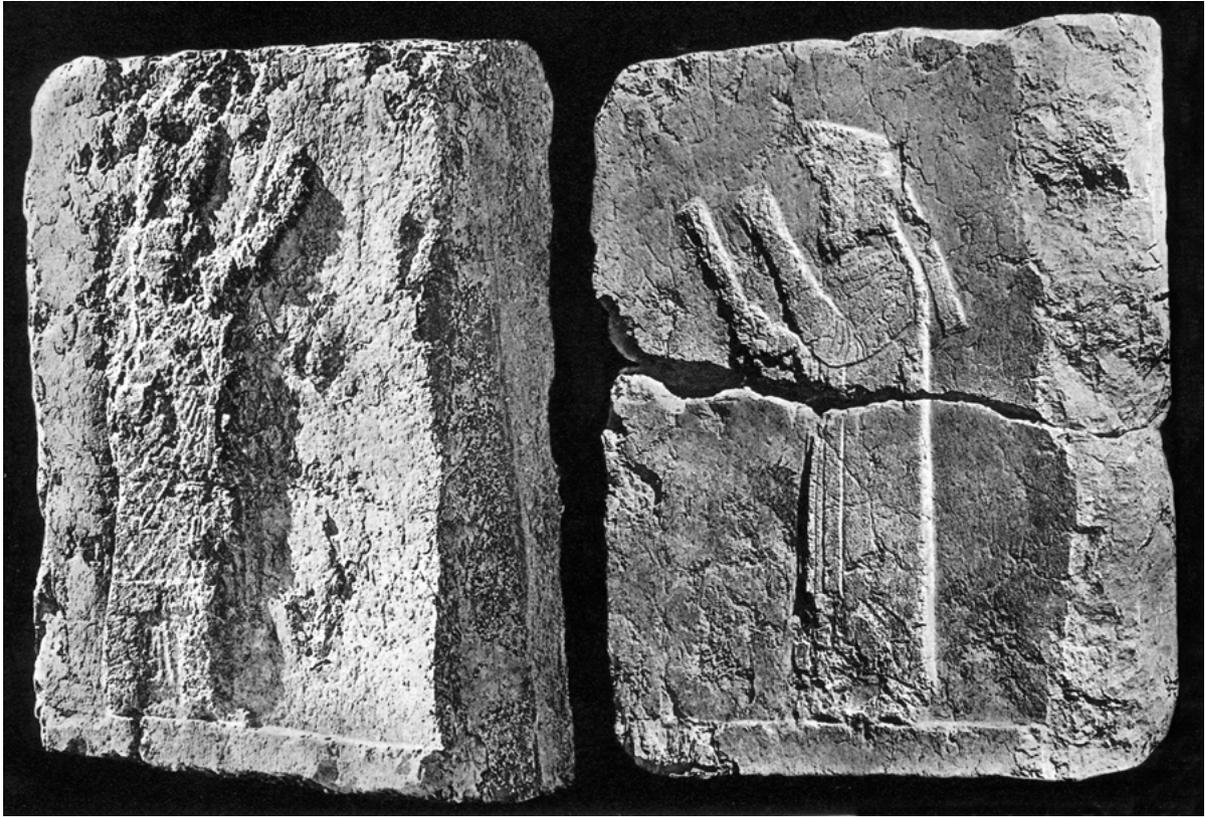


FIG. 3.2 Bas-reliefs of the Fratadara complex (after Ghirshman).

king.²⁷ No archaeological evidence is known from Persepolis to indicate a Parthian presence there. The remains of this period are certainly to be sought in Istakhr. The coins of the local rulers in the second century B.C. demonstrate that the Parthian model of coinage became generally adopted in Persis, which remained loyal to the Parthian king until the seizure of the province by another ruling family in the early third century.

The Sasanian kings, themselves native to Fars, used Istakhr as a royal residence and regional centre. They remained attracted by the ruins of Persepolis only five kilometres away

and so magnificently situated against the mountains. They did not seem to know an ancient name for the place, referring to it by the descriptively evocative term *Sad-Sotun* (hundred columns).²⁸ In addition to applying important inscriptions and visual representations on and adjacent to Achaemenid monuments in the Persepolis area, the Sasanians emulated major Achaemenid motifs visible on the still-standing ruins of the Takht for their own imperial presentations. A number of scholars have asserted that there is no relation between the Sasanian art and the art of the Achaemenid period.²⁹ To begin with, Herzfeld

27 Wiesehöfer, “Fars under Seleucid and Parthian rule”, *The Age of the Parthians*, p. 42.

28 The name is mentioned in one of the Sasanian inscriptions at Persepolis (Frye, “The Persepolis Middle-Persian inscriptions from the time of Shapur II”, *AO 30*, p. 85).

29 For instance, Michael Roaf mentions examples to compare the two artistic schools only in order to reject that there is a connection between them (Roaf, “Persepolitan echoes in Sasanian architecture”, *The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Persia*, pp. 1–7).

notices the rupture from the past after the fall of the Achaemenid empire, and the beginning of a new era:³⁰

It is strange to think how a world that looked back on two and a half millennia of tradition could seemingly throw off, in a few years' time, its own nature and slip on a borrowed one. The effect sets in much more suddenly than modern Europeanization, with which it has been rightly compared. In antiquity, as today, the process must have been a conscious one, and comprehends the avowal, unconditional and unrestricted, of defeat and inferiority.

But to give up is easy, to take over is not. How deep did this movement go?

In reality, it did not go so deep, and a full Hellenization of Iranian territories was never achieved. As Ghirshman subtly analyzed the topic more than half a century ago, the Hellenization of Iran “touched the surface rather than the roots of the society. It succeeded in substance and in form but did not reach the spirit. The two worlds brought together by the Macedonian conquest were indeed too dissimilar”.³¹ It is true that there was no direct, historical knowledge about the Achaemenids, but as Shahbazi has shown, the early Sasanians did have some memory of the Achaemenids, which was subsequently lost in the late Sasanian period. His arguments have been sup-

ported by further historical and linguistic evidence.³² The burning of Persepolis has had a long lasting effect on the memory of Iranians, and is echoed centuries later. It was particularly vivid in the early medieval period when a Persian prince, Ardashir, rose up in Persia “pretending to seek revenge for the blood of Dara, whom Alexander fought”.³³

Tabari provides the earliest evidence on the presence of the Sasanians at Persepolis in the context of the conflict between Ardashir and his elder brother, Shapur. Following Papak's death, Shapur became the king of Fars, and demanded acknowledgement by Ardashir, his younger brother who was then the governor of Darabgird. Upon Ardashir's refusal and his rebellious behaviour, Shapur set out with an army for Darabgird. Tabari informs us that Shapur was killed on his way to southern Fars at the very beginning of the campaign by a structure that collapsed at a place named Palace of Hoday, which is most probably Persepolis. The decayed buildings were inhabitable but it is quite possible that a few buildings had maintained their superstructures well into the third century. This also reveals that the site must have been of importance for the members of the House of Sasan in the early third century.³⁴

30 Herzfeld, *AHI*, pp. 44-45.

31 Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 216.

32 Shahbazi, “Early Sasanians' claims to Achaemenid heritage”, *NIB* 1/1, pp. 61-73. Further evidence has been presented by Touraj Daryaee (“Memory and history: the construction of the past in Late Antique Persia”, *NIB* 1/2, pp. 1-14). Philip Huyse discusses that the Sasanians being unaware of their historical predecessors (the Achaemenids). On the contrary, the Romans knew that the Sasanians were descendants of the Achaemenids, and their historians added the Sasanian claim to western territories of their empire. He adds that the Sasanians were not interested in enlarging their territory anywhere else than in Armenia and Mesopotamia (Huyse, “La revendication de territoires achéménides par les Sassanides?”, *Iran: questions et connaissances*, vol. 1, pp. 306-308). Briant meticulously explore the question of how the Roman historians viewed the Persians. He concludes that the memory of the Achaemenids in Roman and Byzantine texts is reconstructed and limited. In these texts, the memory of the Persian Empire is reflected in the *histoire universelle* and through the theory of the five great empires, in which the Achaemenid empire precedes the Roman empire. By the same token, the Median Wars conceived as being an earlier conflict between the Eastern and Western forces, the memory of which is to remind the triumph of the West or the Romans (Briant, “Perses et Iraniens après la disparition de l'empire achéménide: histoire et historiographie”, *Histoire et civilisation du monde achéménide et de l'empire d'Alexandre*, année 2001-2002, pp. 775-776). In the same article, Briant shows the nineteenth century state of knowledge on the Achaemenids by quoting from Gaston Maspéro's *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, vol. III, in which the French Egyptologist points out the scarcity of Achaemenid material remains (pp. 764-765).

33 Shahbazi, *Iranians and Alexander*, *AJAH*. 2/1, p. 20.

34 Tabari's account is given in Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, p. 8. This passage has been omitted in Bal'ami's translation, who does not say what happened to Shapur. For this, see Zotenberg's French transla-



FIG. 3.3 Drawing of the Sasanian graffiti in the main wing of the Harem (after Sami).

The Achaemneid monuments in Fars attracted the Sasanians as early as the third century. The royal necropolis at Naqsh-e Rostam became the royal “museum” for the Sasanians who immortalized their victories and exploits by having them carved on the sacred cliff below the tombs of their illustrious predecessors.³⁵

The ruins of Persepolis bear witness to an interesting repertoire of the early Sasanians and their attachment to the site.³⁶ The incised sketches or graffiti of Sasanian princes were carved on the stone elements of the so-called Harem of Xerxes, with another (of a standing

figure) occurring on the walls of the Palace of Darius. The first graffiti show a procession of dignitaries and the Sasanian prince on horseback (fig. 3.3). The main figure is a male personage on horseback wearing a tunic and trousers. He has a cap decorated with jewels, and holds in his right hand a ring of power. In the middle of the panel, the head of another knight with a typically Partho-Sasanian cap is preserved. The opposite side of the panel represents two other individuals mounted on horseback, of which the first displays features of a princely personage. The horses are directed by two individuals afoot, represented with

tion, *Chronique de Tabari*, vol. 2, p. 69. The best summary of the formative years of the Sasanians in an archaeological context is given by Dietrich Huff, who also mentions the conflict between Shapur and Ardashir: “Formation and ideology of the Sasanian State in the context of archaeological evidence”, *The Idea of Iran: the Sasanian Era*, pp. 31-59.

35 Leo Trümpelmann, ascribing a funerary function to the site, writes that the mountain-side at Naqsh-e Rostam was the necropolis of Persepolis and Istakhr from the Achaemenid to Sasanian periods (Trümpelmann, “Sasanian graves and burial customs”, *Arabie orientale, Mésopotamie et Iran méridional*, p. 328). This is overly true because there is no Sasanian *dakhma* or ossuary at the site. It seems that the Sasanians deliberately avoided to bury their dead in the proximity of the Achaemenid tombs.

36 For an art historical study of these remains at Persepolis and their significance, see Canepa, “Technologies of memory in early Sasanian Iran: Achaemenid sites and Sasanian identity”, *AJA* 114/4, pp. 563-596.

typically Sasanian garments and gesture. Based on numismatic evidence, Herzfeld with his sharp eye and intuition identified the horseman with the figure of Manucehr of Istakhr.³⁷ There is no trace of paint on these graffiti, and they seem to be deliberately left incomplete. Pierfrancesco Callieri, following Peter Calmeyer and without providing any convincing evidence, writes that these incised figures are not part of an unfinished scene, and that the rest may have been filled with painting. He also thinks that the entire scene was the representation of a procession.³⁸ Such an attitude is represented on the Sasanian investiture scenes, and particularly reminds us of the investiture scene of Ardashir at Naqsh-e Rostam. Considering their unusual location where they can be hardly seen, these graffiti may have represented some sort of sketches for large-scale artworks, such as the bas-reliefs in the vicinity of Persepolis. On the same side of the palace, there is another standing figure with a large cap shaped like a leaf, which surmounts his headdress (fig. 3.4). The figure’s left hand is on the hilt of his long sword, and his right hand is stretched forward toward an incense burner. This figure has been identified as Papak, father of Ardashir. There is another graffiti with the representation of a standing male figure that raises his right hand in a gesture of worship or salute. The figure may have been the representation of Shapur, son of Papak, and the elder brother of Ardashir.³⁹ This does not explain why the individual on horseback represented on the right side of the scene holds a ring with his right arm stretched forward.

The Sasanians were moved by the historical aura of the site, and wished to establish a spiritual connection with the bygone rulers



FIG. 3.4 Drawing of the Sasanian graffiti in the main hall of the Harem identified by Herzfeld as Shapur, son of Papak, the elder brother of Ardashir (after Sami).

who had created it. Shapur II is proudly advertised through two inscriptions in Middle Persian engraved on the southern face of the east jamb of the doorway (fig. 3.5) linking the main hall to the portico of the Palace of Darius (the Tachara).⁴⁰ One of these bore witness to a royal visit by the governor of Sistan and Sind in the second year of the reign of Shapur II (r. 309–379), and the other was

37 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 81.

38 Callieri, “At the roots of the Sasanian royal imagery: the Persepolis graffiti”, *Erān ud Anerān*, p. 7. There are numerous errors in his paper, and the author himself is confused by different drawings and renderings of the graffiti, which could have been avoided only by means of a first-hand examination of the figures. Besides, Callieri was apparently unaware of Razmjou’s informative article on Herzfeld’s study of those graffiti: Razmjou, “Ernst Herzfeld and the study of graffiti at Persepolis”, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies*, pp. 314–341.

39 Herzfeld, *AHI*, p. 80, fig. 10.

40 See Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 223, n. 11.

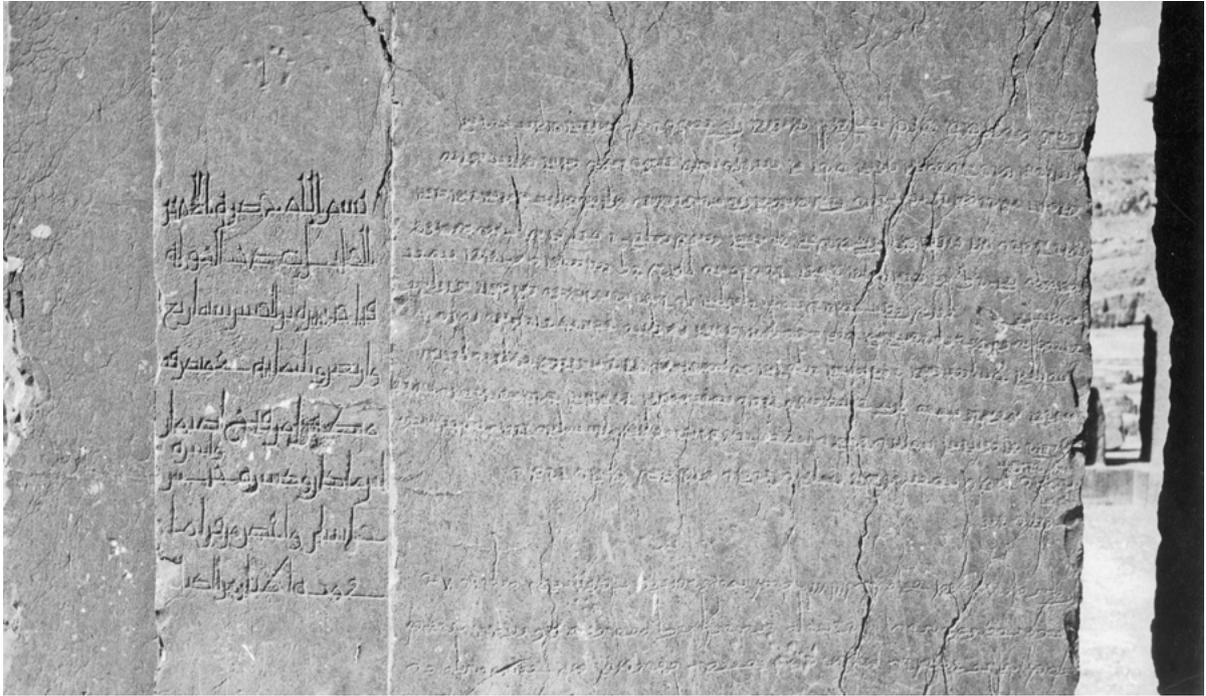


FIG. 3.5 One of the stone doorways of the Palace of Darius (the Tachara) with an inscription in Pahlavi of the Sasanian king Shapur II (at right) and the Kufic inscription of Azad al-Dowleh (at left) dated to the tenth century. (Photo: A. Hakemi).

carved by two nobles in his honour decades later in his long reign. The text of the earlier inscription reads:⁴¹

In the month of Spandarmad, in the second year of the reign of His Mazda-worshipping Majesty Shapur, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, who is scion of the Gods. At that time when Shapur Sagan-shah, king of Sind, Sistan, and Turan down to the seashore, son of the Mazda-worshipping lord Hormuzd, King of Kings of Iran and Non-Iran, who is scion of the Gods, departed from the court of his Majesty, he travelled on this road, between Istakhr and Sistan, and graciously came here to Sad-Sotun.

Then, he had lunch in this building. With him were Bahram, son of Nahv Hormuzd, the Sistan councillor, Narseh the Magus, of the Varāz family, Ven, son of Rev Mehran, Satrap of Zarang, Narseh the scribe, and other Persians and nobles from Sistan and Zarang, princes and messengers from every quarter. He organized a great feast, and ordered rites performed, workmen were ordered to raise a pillar, and he offered blessings to his father and ancestors.

Then he offered blessings to Shapur the King of Kings, to His own soul, and also to the one who had built this structure.

May God remember them.

41 The two Pahlavi inscriptions of Persepolis were first translated by Herzfeld whose translation has been reproduced in Mostafavi's *The Land of Pārs*, pp. 216–217. Nyberg published them in *A Manual of Pahlavi*, part I, pp. 126–127. Later, Frye published a free translation of both inscriptions in “Persepolis Middle Persian inscriptions from the time of Shapur II”, *AO 30*, pp. 84–93. Recently, Wiesehöfer published an abridged translation of the earlier text in his *Ancient Persia*, p. 223. The most recent reading is that of Daryaei, which I have used here: “Katibey-e Shapur Sakānshāh dar Takht-e Jamshid”, *Farhang* 37–38, pp. 107–114.

IV
TAKHT-E JAMSHID:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF A HISTORICAL SITE
INTO A MYTHICAL SYMBOL

Upon this ancient stone, smooth-faced and cool,
New letters have been carved with sharpened tool,
That this inscription might remain secure,
In memory of me, and long endure.¹

In 649, Istakhr was captured by the Arabs, and in a few decades, the whole region of Fars was conquered and pacified. Nonetheless, the city remained important during the early Islamic centuries.² Nothing is known of the ruins during those years, but the sculptures and architectural elements may have suffered from the conquerors' iconoclastic measures. Nevertheless, additional nuances of meaning accrued to the ruins on the Takht as succeeding eras attached special symbolic qualities to them. With the compilation of the official Sasanian history known as *Khwādāy-Nāmag*, or Book of Lords, a genealogy was established in which Ardashir, the founder of the dynasty, was made a direct descendent of the legendary kings, whose capital was in Istakhr, i.e., Persepolis.³ By the time of the Sasanians, the ruins had already acquired the status of legend through association with Jamshid, the mythical hero-king of ancient Iran, to whom the construction of the monuments became attributed. Both of the names Sad-Sotun and Takht-e Jamshid appear in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi (the Book of Kings, completed around 1010) in the context of Zahak's usurpation of Jamshid's throne; the connection of Jamshid

with Persepolis is likely to have been one with a long history already.⁴ In later times, the naming tradition by reference to the remarkable soaring columns at the site might vary to indicate different numbers—such as the commonly used epithet *Chelmenar* (Forty pillars). The idea remained focused on conveying their marvellous abundance as a defining physical feature of the ruins. It is why the remarkable subtleties of Iranian engagement with this place after the Islamic conquest of Iran deserve to be addressed here.

Jam, or Jamshid, is the most celebrated of Iranian legendary kings from the legendary dynasty of Pishdadians. He is often mentioned in Persian literature, and has always been considered the supreme ruler of a period of splendour and prosperity whose tragic downfall occasioned by his arrogance brought unprecedented misfortunes to the people of his realm.⁵ His name appears in both Indian and Iranian sources; he is mentioned in the Gathas, the oldest part of the Avesta, and figures in almost all of the Middle Persian sources which have been analysed and discussed with rigor and critical acumen by Christensen.⁶ The liberation of Iran came about with the rise of Fereydoun, the heroic figure of ancient Iranian epic, who put an end to the cruel rule of Zahak. Being the most famous personality of ancient Iranian epic, Jamshid is also associated with

1 A couplet carved on a window frame of Tachara, dated to 957 A.D. (Mostfavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 223).

2 M. Streck, "Istakhr", *EncIs*, p. 220.

3 Shahbazi, "From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid," p. 204. The original text of the *Khwādāy-Nāmag*, compiled during the reign of Khosrow II (590–628), was lost, but it survived in an eighth century translation of the text into Arabic by Ibn Muqaffa. For a full account, see Yarshater, "Iranian national history", *CHI* 3/1, 359–360; Shahbazi, "On the Xwadāy-Nāmag", *Iranica Varia: Papers in honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Acta Iranica XVI, pp. 208–229.

4 Shahbazi, "From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid", *AMI* 10, p. 202.

5 Skjaervo, "Jamšid: i. myth of Jamšid", *EncIr*, online edition.

6 Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi*, part 2 pp. 11–31 (for Middle Persian sources).

the biblical figure Solomon.⁷ Once again, Tabari tells us that Jamshid ordered demons to cut stones and rocks, and prepare marbles, plaster, and mortar in order to construct buildings with those materials as well as mud-brick. This has always been attributed to Solomon. In another account left by Mas'udi, one of the great historians of the tenth century and known as "Herodotus of the Arabs", the author describes the site and its association with Solomon:⁸

One of the most venerated places of the Guebres (Zoroastrians) was in Istakhr, in Fars, which had been originally a temple of idols. Queen Hoday, daughter of Bahman, son of Isfandiar, transformed it into a fire temple, and destroyed the idols. Later, the fire was removed and the building fell into ruins. Today, (332 of hegira), it is considered as the ancient mosque of Salomon, son of David, and because of that it is called Masjid-e Suleiman. I visited it. It is about a *farsakh* [7 km] from the town of Istakhr. It is an admirable monument with an imposing temple. There, I saw pillars made of blocks of such a stupendous dimension, surmounted by singular figures of horses and other animals; they are remarkable by virtue of their stature and form. There is a large space inside the edifice, and a wall made of massive blocks, the surface of which is covered by bas-reliefs of an ingenious achievement. The inhabitants of the area see them as images of prophets. These ruins are located at the foot of a mountain, where the wind blows day and night with impetuosity, a fact that makes Muslims of the area say that the place is wherein Solomon used to imprison the wind...

When Mas'udi described the ruins in the first half of the tenth century, the names of Jamshid and Solomon had been already associated with the site as only these two figures had power over the *devs* (demons) to force them to

build these gigantic works. In the same period, Istakhri's account in *Masālik al-Mamālik* corroborates Mas'udi's: "There still exists a mosque in Istakhr, which is called the Mosque of Solomon, son of David, and some people believe that Jam, who reigned before Zahak, is Solomon, which is incorrect".⁹ Tabari, without mentioning the ruins directly, writes of the deeds of Jamshid and his control over *devs*. He attributes the foundation of Istakhr to Queen Hoday, mother of Dara, the last king of the ancient Iranian dynasties before the invasion of Alexander.¹⁰ It is the time when Jamshid was replaced by king Solomon in the Iranian literature and historiography. The development that led to such an attribution is not well known. In accordance with Iranian tradition and beliefs, the attribution of pre-Islamic monuments to Solomon goes back to the time of the Muslim conquest, and it was a good protection against the destroying will of the iconoclastic Arabs. How did the Iranians know that Solomon was also a highly respected figure in the Koran, and that the Muslims would respect his deeds?¹¹ Nothing can better describe the Iranian traditional approach to the question than Sir John Malcolm's remarks in a conversation he had with some of his Persian and Indian fellow-travellers, when he visited the ruins in 1810:¹²

"This building," said Aga Meer, "was the house of Solomon, at least so I have read in the History of Shiraz." "And what did the foolish writer of that book know about Solomon?" said Mahomed Houssein Khan; "but the author, I suppose, concluded, that because Solomon was the wisest of men, he must choose Persia as his residence; and every Persian will agree in such a conclusion." "No doubt,"

7 In the *Shahnameh*, Jamshid is both king and priest.

8 Mas'udi, *Muruj al-zahab va ma'adin al-jawāher* (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), Persian translation by A. Payandeh, vol. 1, Tehran, 1356 H.S./1977, p. 605. There is also an excellent French translation by Charles Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille in nine volumes: *Les prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861–1917.

9 Istakhri, *Masālik va Mamālik*, p. 110.

10 Tabari, *Chronique de Tabari*, vol. 1, p. 510.

11 In keeping with the Western scholarship, rejecting such traditional beliefs, the explanation is that the knowledge of the past had been lost by the time of the Arab conquest of Iran, and the association of Jamshid with Solomon was the result of such a lack of awareness (see, for example, Yarshater, "Were the Sasanians heir to the Achaemenids?", *La Persia nel Medioevo*, pp. 517–531).

12 Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, vol. 1, pp. 214–216. Malcolm visited Iran three times between 1799 and 1810. He placed his name among others at the Gate of All Lands (Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, pp. 42–43).

said the mild Aga Meer, either not understanding the little nabob's sarcasm at the vanity of his countrymen, or not wishing to enter into farther discussion.

"People are divided," said the Khan, pleased with his own sally, "whether this was a palace or a temple; if it was built and inhabited by Jemsheed, it was probably both; for he says, in the Shah-nameh, 'By the divine favour, I am both a sovereign and a priest'; and if this first and most wonderful man of Persia studied his ease and convenience half as much as his countrymen now do, it is most probable, that, to save himself trouble, he would join his palace and his temple together."

"You Europeans," continued Khan Sahib, turning to me, "believe that Alexander, to please a beautiful lady, set fire to this palace in a spirit of mischief; we Mahomedans have the consolation to think this proud abode of unbelievers was destroyed when our first caliphs conquered Persia, through a spirit of holiness. It was a rule," said he, smiling, "of the first pious propagators of our religion, always to give to infidels an earnest in this world of what they were to expect in the next; so they and their profane works were included in one common sentence of destruction."

When Jamshid was replaced by Solomon, his throne and palace were also given to the latter. We find such an association in one of the oldest surviving books in the Persian language: the Persian translation of Tabari's *Commentary on the Koran* commissioned by the Samanid Amir Mansur (r. 961–976) and compiled by a group of scholars in Transoxiana in the tenth century; it preceded the earliest European allusions to Persepolis by several hundred years.¹³ Here, notions of the mythical Iranian Jamshid and Solomon merge in the attribution of Persepolis. In the 34th sura of the Koran, in praise of prophets David and Solomon, there is a reference to Solomonic buildings: "They [demons] made for him whatever he [Solomon] desired of temples,

and statues, and basins large as reservoirs, and huge cooking vessels fixed in their places" (*Koran*, sura 34: Al-Saba, 13).¹⁴ In the interpretation of this verse, Tabari attributes the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem to Solomon, but for its description he uses an unknown text that is precisely a description of the ruins at Persepolis. The key to the understanding of such a confused account has been brilliantly explained in an article by Shahbazi.¹⁵ Tabari's interpretation is, indeed, connected with reliefs at Persepolis:¹⁶

Those structures were *mihhrabs* for mosques of different colours. Those reliefs represented figures, the making of which was not forbidden at that time. There were figures of two lions at the foot of Solomon's throne, and two vultures above it, which cast shade on the throne and its seat. It is said that the legs of the throne were in red ruby in the form of four lions, and there were two vultures above the throne... There were also vessels, and a huge container made out of the mountain rock by demons, so big that no one could move it.

Everyone familiar with the ruins of Persepolis can easily realize that Tabari's account includes allusions to the site. In the open area to the south-east of the Gate of All Lands, and to the north of the Apadana, there is a huge block of stone (5.68 × 4.85 × 2 m), in which a large cavity is hewn. Its function has always been a matter of debate, but it may have served as a pond with a fountain connected to underground water channels, or as a tank or basin containing purified and sacred water. One of the courtyard's channels passes beneath this structure.¹⁷ Be that as it may, this large stone block looks very much like a stone basin, to which Tabari's account refers as the "huge container made out of the mountain rock by demons". The vessels mentioned in

13 Bosworth, "Al-Tabari", *EncIs*, p. 14. Tabari's history is a multi-volume book: *Tarjomeyeh Tafsir-e Tabari farāham āmadeh dar zamān-e Mansur ebn-e Nuh Sāmāni*, edited by Habib Yaqmai, Tehran, 1356 H.S./1977, 6 vols. Tabari's both *Commentary* and *Chronicles* are among the oldest texts in Persian, the history of which have been studied in detail by Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, pp. 38–45.

14 Both David and Solomon are mentioned in the *Koran* as prophets.

15 Shahbazi, "Kohantarin towsif-e Takht-e Jamshid dar zabān-e fārsi", *MBT* 12/1-2, p. 3. See also Ker Porter's interpretation of the reliefs (below, chapter VII).

16 Tabari, *Tarjomeyeh Tafsir-e Tabari*, vol. 5, pp. 1237–1238.

17 Shahbazi, *Persepolis Illustrated*, p. 17 and colour plate III.

the text may have been those seen in one of the panels of gift-bearers on the north staircases of the Apadana. Moreover, it is interesting to recall that to the east of the Treasury, at the foot of the mountain, there is a large well cut into the rock twenty-six metres deep. The area round the well is linked to a large moat which drains the rainwater from the slope of the mountain to the plain below the Terrace. According to popular belief, the well is called *Zendan-e bad* (Prison of Wind), wherein Solomon would capture the wind.¹⁸ As for the figures of lions and vultures, there are a number of panels representing the Achaemenid king on its throne. The best example is the scene carved on the doorways of the Hall of a Hundred Columns, on which the legs of the royal throne are in the form of lions' paws and it is surmounted by the winged symbol of the Royal Glory (otherwise often identified as the symbol of Ahuramazda), described as a vulture in Tabari's text. He states also in his *Chronicles* that the throne of Solomon was made of red ruby, and had four legs in the form of lion's paws. Solomon's throne was surmounted by two vultures with open wings in order to provide shade when he gave audience.¹⁹ The scene can also be seen on the façade of the royal tombs at Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam. As Shahbazi notices, Tabari must have prepared his text from various earlier Iranian sources available to him in the tenth century, and this text is, for the time being, the oldest medieval reference to Persepolis.²⁰

In the tenth century, Fars and the whole region of southern Iran and Mesopotamia witnessed a great period of prosperity and peace under the reign of Buyid ruler Azad al-Dowleh (r. 338/949–372/982). He maintained a large

army and his adroit handling of administrative and political affairs made him an exceptional ruler. Being a great builder of his time, he embellished his capital Shiraz, where he built for himself a grandiose palace. According to Muqaddasi, who himself visited Shiraz in the late tenth century, one large hall of the palace was occupied by a library that seems to have rivaled that of the Samanids in Bukhara. Azad al-Dowleh collected and shelved all the books that existed in every branch of learning, including books in the fields of Islamic jurisprudence, philosophical discourse, history, poetry, grammar, prosody, medicine, astronomy, and geometry. The ruler himself was an assiduous student of Arabic, wrote Arabic verse, and was proud that one of his teachers was the celebrated grammarian of Arabic, Fāresi. Muqaddasi himself frequently refers to manuscripts that he used in Azad al-Dowleh's library.²¹ He patronized Arabic authors and the learning of Arabic, Persian, and also Pahlavi (taught by Zoroastrian priests in Fars). By following such a general trend of intellectual life in his time in his home province, Azad al-Dowleh apparently attempted to compete with the Samanid rulers, who were remarkable Iranian patrons of sciences and literature at that time. It is therefore not surprising that he should show more interest than previous Buyid rulers in evoking the pre-Islamic Iranian precedents for Buyid kingship. He chose the title of *Shahanshab* (king of kings) on his coins and in public ceremonies. Azad al-Dowleh was probably the first ruler to bear that title since the fall of the Sasanians with whom he claimed a genealogical link.²² He celebrated the ancient Iranian festivals of Sadeh and Mehregan and Nowruz as well, which had

18 Shahbazi, "Kohantarin towsif-e Takht-e Jamshid dar zabān-e fārsi", *MBT* 12/1-2, p. 4. Forsat also mentions the traditional belief of *Zendān-e bād* in his exploration of subterranean canals at Persepolis (*Asār-e Ajam*, p. 189).

19 Tabari, *Chronique de Tabari*, vol. 1, p. 435.

20 Shahbazi, "Kohantarin towsif-e Takht-e Jamshid dar zaban-e fārsi", *MBT* 12/1-2, p. 5.

21 Muqaddasi, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, p. 395. A concise description of Azad al-Dowleh's buildings and embellishments in Shiraz, recounted from Muqaddasi, is given by Barthold in *An Historical Geography of Iran*, pp. 155–156.

22 Bosworth, "The heritage of rulership in early Islamic Iran and the search for dynastic connections with the past", *Iran* 11, p. 57.

been celebrated by numerous earlier Islamic rulers.²³ Azad al-Dowleh visited Persepolis and left inscriptions that showed his consciousness of the association of Buyid kingship with pre-Islamic Iran. The first inscription was carved in the year 344 H./A.D. 955 after his victory in Isfahan, and the defeat of the army of Khorasan sent by the Samanids. When passing by the ruins of Persepolis, he stayed there and sent for someone who could read the inscriptions engraved there. This inscription in kufic characters has been carved on the left side of the two Pahlavi inscriptions.²⁴ The second inscription is dated to the same year, and has been placed on the inner wall of the stone window frame of the Palace of Darius (fig. 3.5, the inscription at left) and opposite the first one, and adds something to the information given in the former inscription.²⁵

The brave Azad al-Dowleh, may God support him, was present in the month of Safar, 344, and the writing, which is on these remains, was read to him. It was read by Ali, son of Serri, the Karkhi secretary and Mar Sa'nad, the Mowbed of Kazerun.

The third Buyid inscription placed on the opposite side the Azad al-Dowleh's inscriptions is dated to the year 392 H./A.D. 1001, and bears the name of Azad al-Dowleh's son, Abu Nasr, who came to Persepolis while hunting with some of his soldiers in the whereabouts (fig. 4.1). The inscription was vandalized by a certain J. M. Merhab who scratched his name on it in the early twentieth century. Some forty years later, Abu Kalinjar, one of the last Buyid rulers, visited Persepolis twice and left an in-

scription in naskh on one of the stone window frames of the Palace of Darius:²⁶

The Great Shahanshah, the King of kings, the Reviver of Religion, the Succourer of the servants of God, the Sharer of Divine Rule, Abu Kalinjar, the son of Sultan al-Dowleh glorifying the Prince of Faithful (may God prolong his days) visited this place on the Bahman day of the month Aban in the year 438, proceeding with his star in the ascendant to Kerman. He was here in the year 418, which was the year of the victory at Faruq.

Abu Kalinjar or Abu Kalijar the Marzban (the Guardian of Frontiers), also known as Muhyi'eddin, began his reign in 1024, and for a brief spell reunited the Buyid territories in Iraq and Iran.²⁷ When his father, Sultan ad-Dawlah, died in December 1023/January 1024, Abu Kalinjar's succession to the sultan's Iranian possessions of Fars and Khuzestan was challenged by his uncle Abu al-Fawaris, the ruler of Kerman, to the west. By 1028 Abu Kalinjar was victorious and added Kerman to his domains. The inscription of Persepolis refers to his victory at Faruq, a village located eighteen kilometres to the north-east of Persepolis. There are contradictory accounts on the destruction of the citadel and fortifications of Istakhr by Abu Kalinjar who, being afraid of the menacing Oghuz Turks, had to displace the population of Istakhr and put a wall round his capital Shiraz for the first time in its history.²⁸ For some scholars, this also caused the destruction of the outer walls and fortifications of Persepolis which were still visible in the tenth century.²⁹ The last of the Buyids,

23 Bürger and Mottahedeh, “Azod-al-Dawla”, *Enclr*, vol. 3, p. 267.

24 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 218.

25 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 218; Mokhlesi reads Mar Safand for the name of the Zoroastrian priest, see “Barresi va pajuhesh dar do katibeye-e Azad-al Dowleh dar Takht-e Jamshid”, *Athar* 36-37, pp. 101-102.

26 Sami, “Yādbud-e didār-e pādesihān az Tachar, kākh-e Dāriyush-e bozorg dar Takht-e Jamshid”, *HM* 148, pp. 4-5; Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 220.

27 For the history of Istakhr in that period, see Sami, *Asār-e tārikhiy-e jolgey-e Marvdasht*, pp. 32-33.

28 Bosworth, “The political and dynastic history of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000-1217)”, *CHI*, vol. 5, p. 40. But according to Hamdullah Mostowfi, it was Samsam-al Dowleh, son of Azad al-Dowleh, who put a wall round Shiraz, after having suppressed a rebellion in Istakhr where he ordered the city wall to be razed (*Nuzhat al Qolub*, quoted by Bosworth).

29 Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, vol. 1, p. 172; Bassiri, *Rāhnamāy-e Takht-e Jamshid*, p. 67; Sami, *Asār-e tārikhiy-e jolgey-e Marvdasht*, pp. 32-33.



FIG. 4.1 The inscription of Abu Nasr, son of Azad al-Dowleh, dated 392 A.H./1001 A.D. The inscription was vandalized by a certain J. M. Merhab who scratched his name on it.

Abu Nasr Khosrow Firuz, also had his name engraved on the occasion of his visit to the site in 444 H./A.D. 1052.³⁰

There is a hiatus of some two hundred years in the sequence of inscriptions at the Palace of Darius.³¹ Nothing is known after the demise of the Buyids and the reign of the Saljuks in Iran, except for a short inscription recording the visit of a certain Abul Fawaris accompanied by a person named Mardavan in 536 H./A.D. 1167.³² This shows that the ruins continued to attract visitors during the Saljuk period, which was a time of great artistic and literary achievements. The early twelfth century saw the appearance of the *Fārsnāma* attributed to Ibn Balkhi, a conventional name for an otherwise unknown author. The *Fārsnāma* was a

local history and geography of the province of Fars written in Persian during the Saljuq period. Ibn Balkhi's grandfather was chief accountant for the taxation of Fars around 492/1099 under Atabak Rokn al-Dowleh, who had been appointed governor there by Sultan Barkiarokh. Ibn Balkhi apparently accompanied his grandfather in his travels through the province, thus acquiring first-hand knowledge of such information as its local conditions, topography, crops, and economy. He was subsequently commissioned by Barkiarokh's successor to put together an account of Fars. The *Fārsnāma* accordingly dedicated to the Saljuq sultan, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad, must have been composed sometime before 510/1116.³³ As for the ruins near Istakhr, the

30 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 222.

31 Nineteen post-Achaemenid coins were found in Schmidt's excavations on the Terrace. Schmidt reports that the post-Achaemenid coins were uncovered in the northern sector of the Apadana (Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 72). He entrusted the publication of the post-Achaemenid coins to George C. Miles who listed them as Persepolis Treasury finds (Miles, *Excavation Coins from the Persepolis Region*, pp. 85-90).

32 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 222.

33 Bosworth, "Ibn al-Balkhi", *EncIs*, supplement, fasc. 5-6, p. 382.

author describes the fortress of Jamshid as the most marvellous accomplishment of this mythical hero-king:³⁴

He [Jamshid] built a palace at the foot of the hill, the equal of which was not to be found in the whole world. At the foot of the hill, he laid out a platform of solid stone that was black in colour, the platform being four-sided, one side against the hill foot and the other three sides towards the plain, and the height of the platform was on all sides 30 cubits. In the fore-face thereof he built two stairways, so easy to ascend that horsemen could ride up without difficulty. Then upon the platform he erected columns of solid blocks in white stone so finely worked that even in wood it might be impossible to make the like by painting or carving; and these columns are very tall, and different in pattern and design, and among the rest there are two columns in particular which stood before the threshold, these being square in shape, and formed of a white stone that resembled marble. Nowhere else in all provinces of Pars is any stone like this found, and no one knows whence these blocks were brought.

For one hundred and twenty years Fars was ruled by the Salghurid family of Atabaks (543-686 H./A.D. 1148-1287) who were tributaries first of the Saljuqs, then of the Mongols. In this way, they saved Fars from the ravages of Mongol armies. The province seems to have enjoyed moderate prosperity, especially during the reign of Izz al-Din Sa'd, from whom the celebrated poet, Sa'di derived his *takhallus* or *nom de plume*.³⁵ In the introduction to his *Gulestan*, Sa'di uses the expression of “heir to the Kingdom of Solomon” among

the titles attributed to the Atabak Abu Bakr, son of Sa'd. There are inscriptions of this dynasty engraved on stone blocks taken from the Achaemenid palaces at Pasargadae. Almost all of these inscriptions mention the name of the Salghurid ruler as the heir to the realm of Jam and Solomon; the two personalities were often considered one.³⁶ Historians such as Idrisi (1110–1165), Yaqut (1179–1229), and Abulfeda (1273–1331) covering the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries mention the ruins near Istakhr, but they repeat what had been written before by Mas'udi, Istakhri, and Muqaddasi.³⁷ But the account left by Beyzavi in 674 H./A.D. 1275 stands out. He was a native of Fars (Beyzā), and apparently served as a theologian and judge in Shiraz. His *Nizam al-Tavārikh* written in Persian was supposed to be a world history from the beginning until his time. His reference to the ruins is particularly important because it is for the first time in the history of the site that the name *Chelmenar* (Forty Columns) is mentioned in a Persian text:³⁸

Tahmures having left no son, the nobles of Fars went to Jamshid, who was said to be either the brother or cousin of Tahmures, and whose physical appearance and intellectual capacities surpassed everybody. The nobles chose Jamshid and agreed to obey him. Then, he [Jamshid] began to organize, administer, and make arms and industries, and he embellished the city of Istakhr, and made it a grandiose place extending from Khafrak to Ramjird; it was about twelve farsakh long and ten farsakh

34 Le Strange and Nicholson, *The Fārsnāmā of Ibnū'l-Balkhī*, pp. 126–127.

35 Bosworth, “The political and dynastic history of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)”, *CHI*, vol. 5, pp. 172–173. The same ruler changed the compound surrounding the Tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae into a mosque, and his name is recorded in several places, giving the date of 620 H./A.D. 1223 (Sami, “Pāsārgād yā qadimtarin pāytakht-e shāhanshāhiy-e Iran”, *GB* 4, pp. 97–98; Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pls. 20-21, and 37-38). A hoard of 902 gold coins from the same dynasty was found at a spot to the north-west of the Tomb of Cyrus when the area was being levelled in April 1971 in preparation for the celebration of the Twenty-five Hundredth Anniversary of Iranian monarchy (Stronach, *Pasargadae*, p. 37, note 32; Eslami, “Ganjiney-e sekkehāy-e makshufeh dar Pāsārgād marbut be Sa'd ibn Zangi 599-623 H.”, *HM* 123, pp. 36-38).

36 See the discussion in Melikian Shirvani's excellent article: “Le royaume de Salomon”, *MII* 1, pp. 3–11. Forsat Shirazi claims having seen an inscribed tombstone that may have belonged to Abu Bakr, son of Sa'd ibn Zangi: *Asār-e Ajam*, p. 230.

37 An extremely useful selection of those accounts is published in an important volume by Antonio Invernizzi, *Il Genio Vagante*, pp. 38–58.

38 Beyzavi, *Nezām al-Tavārikh*, pp. 12–13. Later in the fifteenth century, Beyzavi's text was used by Mirkhwand in his *Rowzat al-Safa*, part of which has been translated into English by David Shea, *History of the Early Kings of Persia*, pp. 104–15.

wide. He constructed an immense edifice in Istakhr, of which the columns and other vestiges remain to this day, and it is called Chehel Menar.

No one has ever seen such an edifice in the world. When Jamshid completed this monument, he assembled all the rulers and chiefs of different countries, and at the hour of vernal equinox seated himself on his throne in that palace. He offered justice and clemency, and that day has since been called *nourouz*...

Then comes Hamdullah Mostowfi, who in his *Nuzhat-ol Qolub* composed in the first half of the fourteenth century, quotes Ibn Balkhi in his description of the ruins. Hamdullah uses previous sources. He repeats Beyzavi's description, but adds that there are great Dakhmas or Towers of Silence which the "common people now call Prisons of the Wind". He also confirms that the place was known as Chelmenar. Hamdullah discusses the identification of the site as the Palace of Jamshid, the Mosque of Solomon, or the Palace of Queen Hoday. He writes that "it is possible that King Solomon did indeed convert the Palace of Jamshid into a mosque, and Hoday in her turn changed it into a palace". He finally concludes that the all three traditions may be true.³⁹ With his rationalism and critical mind, Hamdullah did not follow the strange ideas that had been put forward by Muhammad ibn Mahmud Hamadani, in his *Ajā'eb-Nāmeḥ* (Book of Wonders) of about 590 H./A.D. 1194. Hamadani considered the monuments of Pasargadae and Persepolis to be among the works that monsters must have made, so incredible were the engineering feats they represented:⁴⁰

And in the palace of Jamshid, as it is called, a thousand columns have been erected, each one of which is forty-eight cubits in height, and their girth is such that four men cannot encompass it with their arms extended, and it was not within human capacity to set them up, and many have claimed that in that age, even by mechanical means, it would not be possible. And it is clear that it was done by demonic power. And in this black stone edifice [the Palace of

Darius/Tachara] there are figures carved in stone of Daylamites and attendants, and the hair of the Daylamites is curly, and the style of hair of the Turks cannot be described, and until one has seen them, the wonder of them cannot be imagined, for the stones erected one above another weigh each ten thousand *man* [45 tons], and are so closely fitted that there is not a hair's breadth between each stone. And two great bulls have been carved, with hoofs as a bull, and a beard as a man, twelve cubits long and high, and of what weight only God knows, one on one side, and another on the opposite side, such as in the present age no man could erect. If it be said that a genius or fairy had made it, this would be acceptable to the intellect.

The death of the last important Ilkhan, Sultan Abu Sa'id in 1335 created a vacuum of power which worked in favour of various forces contending for authority over Iranian territories. The struggle for power between these groups lasted for half a century until the rise of the Timurids. Fars and central Iran fell into the hands of some petty dynasties such the Injuids and Muzaffarids who already exercised control in Fars and adjacent regions in the early fourteenth century.⁴¹ The inscriptions on the stone structures at the Palace of Darius were resumed with two texts recording the visit of Shaykh Abu Ishaq, the last of the Injuids, whose death was deplored by the most renowned poets of the time such as Ubaid Zakani and Hafez. Shaykh Abu Ishaq has left two inscriptions: the first, in three lines, only gives his name and date of 738 H./A.D. 1337. As Melikian Shirvani points out, it seems that the inscription was deliberately placed near the first inscription of Azad al-Dowleh; this indicates that rulers of different eras were aware of their predecessors' visit to Persepolis.⁴² The second text, in eleven lines, is placed on the interior face of the stone recess on the western side of the southern portico. This text was intentionally damaged in later ages, and is now hardly legible. It is only thanks to Mostafavi's keen eye and intimate knowledge of those in-

39 Mostowfi, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qolub*, pp. 119–120.

40 Adapted from Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 22. Mostafavi's rendering contains some typographical errors that had crept into the edition of his text and its English translation by Sharp. I have corrected these errors here, based upon the original text (Hamadani, *Ajā'eb Nāmeḥ*, p. 35).

41 R. Roemer, "The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs", *CHI*, vol. 6, 1986, pp. 11–16.

42 Melikian Shirvani, "Le royaume de Salomon", *MII*, vol. 1, 1971, p. 20.

scriptions that we have now a coherent translation of the text that begins with the author’s meditation, stating the vanity of human life and eternity of God’s realm; then there are three lines of poems, one in Arabic, and the other two in Persian:⁴³

Where are the first great monarchs, called Khosrow?
 Their stores of treasure gone—themselves also.
 To Throne of Solomon, on him be peace.
 No night or morning brought a sad decrease.
 But see how finally it did decay.
 Blest be the wise and just who pass away.

The spiritual significance of such allusions, as Melikian Shirvani notices, is particularly important in that it contains a double connotation. The poems praise first the myth of great kings such as Khosrow known for his magnificence, and Solomon celebrated for his wisdom and supernatural powers. Then, the author uses the expression *bar bad raft* (lost, disappeared) indicating the futility of worldly affairs; so, whoever has left this world with justice and knowledge is blest.⁴⁴ After these poems, the text recounts that Shaykh Abu Ishaq set up his camp in this eminent and wonderful edifice after his victorious annexation of Kerman and Yazd to his territories. He employed Yahya Jamaledin Sufi, one of the best calligraphers of his time, who also wrote a number of fine Koran manuscripts conserved in the Shah-e Cherāq shrine in Shiraz.⁴⁵

Equally, three other inscriptions of the Muzaffarid dynasty deserve to be mentioned here. These bear the name of Sultan Bāyazid Muzaffari, the brother of Shah Shuja and son of Mu-

bārezeddin Muhammad, the founder of the dynasty. The first inscription, engraved on the eastern side of the southern portico, is dated 772 H./A.D. 1371. It takes up the theme of vanity, and alludes to the sculpture and bas-reliefs seen at the site, and then gives its author’s name and genealogy:⁴⁶

May order undisturbed remain for years,
 And every part of us fall into place.
 May be these lines remain of us, for else,
 No permanence of human life I trace,
 Unless for us poor souls a prayer be said
 By some pure mystic as an act of grace.

After a period of conflicts, the region was under the suzerainty of Shah Shuja (r. 759–786 H./A.D. 1358–1384), another ruler of high cultural standards and a great patron of arts, whose reign was jubilantly greeted by the celebrated Iranian poet Hafiz. No inscription of this ruler has ever been found at Persepolis, but Shah Shuja constructed a large building, probably a residence, in the proximity of the Tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae, and a number of coins and inscriptions dated to his reign have been found in the excavation of the building in 1949.⁴⁷

In the early fifteenth century, Ebrahim Sultan, the son of Prince Shahrokh and the grandson of Timur, visited the ruins in 826 H./A.D. 1422, and left three inscriptions (fig. 4.2). Ebrahim Sultan, being a calligrapher, wrote his memorials on the stone of the Palace of Darius, the longest of which is once more an allusion to the vanity of this world by including a famous poem of Sa’di.⁴⁸

43 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 226.

44 Melikian Shirvani, “Le Royaume de Salomon”, *MII* 1, p. 21.

45 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 226.

46 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 220. The poem has been taken from the introduction of Sa’di’s *Golestan*. The second inscription, carved on the eastern wall of the southern portico, has been published by Mostafavi in *The Land of Pārs*, p. 222, No. 14, with the date of 773 H./1371 A.D. The third inscription was first copied by Herzfeld in “Arabischen Inschriften aus Iran und Syrien”, *AMI* 8, pp. 78–102. It has been reproduced later by Ghassem Ghani (see Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 229, No. 25). A full discussion is again given by Melikian Shirvani, “Le Royaume de Salomon”, *MII*, pp. 22–23.

47 Sami, “Pāsārgād yā qadimtarin pāytakht-e shāhanshāhiy-e Iran”, *GB* 4, pp. 99–103; Kleiss, “Madar-e Suleiman, das Grab des Kyros als islamisches Heiligtum”, *AMI* 12, pp. 281–287.

48 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 227. The poem in question is again: *May order undisturbed remain for years, And every part of us fall into place; May be these lines remain of us, for else, No permanence of human life I trace; Unless for us poor souls a prayer be said, By some pure mystic as an act of grace.*

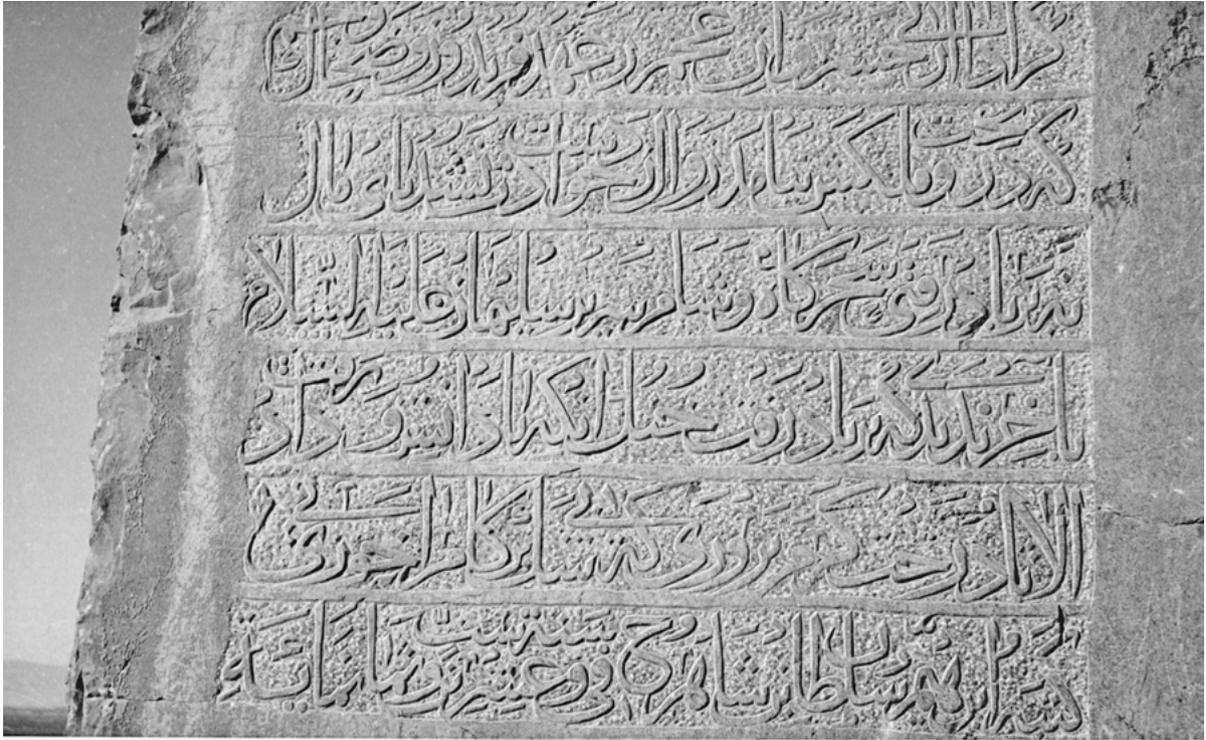


FIG. 4.2 The inscription of Sharokh, grandson of Timur, reciting a poem from Sa'di's *Golestan*, on the western antae of the southern portico, the Palace of Darius, dated to 826 A.H./1422 A.D. (Photo: Hakemi).

The last important inscription of that period is dated 881 H./A.D. 1476, and belongs to Ali, son of Sultan Khalil, son of Uzun Hasan of the Aq-Quyunlu dynasty (fig. 4.3).⁴⁹ On the occasion of a military review held by Prince Khalil, governor of the province of Fars, Jalal al-Din Davani (1426–1502), a prominent philosopher and theologian of Shiraz, takes account of the ruins in his *Arz-Nāmeḥ*. The parade took place near Band-e Amir, and probably in or in the vicinity of Persepolis, of which the author was an eyewitness:⁵⁰

When the King of the of the fourth Clime (i.e. the Sun) moved from the North to the winter quarter of the South, Sultan Khalil moved from the summer quarters of Ming-bulaq (“Thousand Springs”) towards Solomon’s Kingdom [the ruins of Persepolis]. As for a long time no review had been held of the troops, which measured the longitude and the latitude of the Earth, the Prince decided that at this oc-

casation the army should be summoned to a parade....

When the august parasol reached Istakhr of Fars, Sultan Khalil spent one day at the place of astonishing vestiges admiring the wonderful images (*ta-māthil*). Some chronicles say that in the times of Iranian kings (*muluk-e ‘ajam*) this place was called “Thousand Columns”. It was built in the time of Jamshid, who, according to some historians, is Solomon.

It is reported that, having completed the constructions, Jamshid ordered subjects to gather at the foot of the mountain on New Year’s Day. He had caused a golden throne, studded with shining jewels, to be placed on the columns (*bar ān sutunhā*), and sat on it in state. At sunrise he ordered the throne to be turned towards the Sun, and the eyes of the onlookers were dazzled by the brilliancy. Saying that they beheld two suns, one in the sky and the other on earth, they knelt down. Jamshid blessed them and said God had pardoned them. He told them to purify themselves on that day, and thenceforth he was surnamed Jamshid, his name

49 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs.*, p. 219.

50 Minorsky, “A civil and military review in Fārs in 881/1476”, *BSOAS* 10/1, pp. 150–152; for a full translation of the poems, see Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, pp. 219–220.

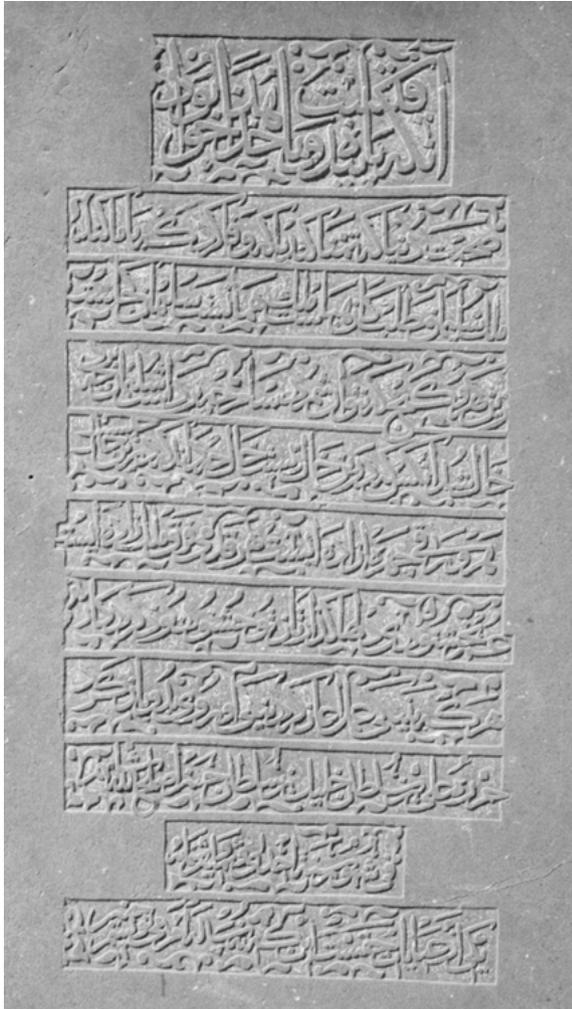


FIG. 4.3 The inscription of Ali, son of Sultan Khalil, son of Uzun Hasan of the Aq-Quyunlu dynasty, engraved on a stone doorway of the Palace of Darius, dated 881 H./A.D. 1476 (Photo: A. Hakemi).

being *Jam* and *shid* meaning “Sun” ...The king considered some poetry which the late martyr Prince Sultan Ibrahim had written in his own writing on some parts of the ruins and gave orders to the “light of the pupil of Sultanate and Caliphate” Prince Abul Ma’ali Sultan Ali Mirza, great expert at calligraphy, to write a few lines of appropriate (*monāseb-e hāl*) poetry opposite that writing (of Sultan Ibrahim)...

Melikian Shirvani argues that Davani’s description of Sultan Khalil’s visit may be the key to the understanding of the importance of

royal visits to the ruins. Was Persepolis considered as a high place of spiritual illumination, much the same as it was remembered as the eternal place of the esoteric Solomonic wisdom? He examines the question from a philosophical point of view, and indicates that the heir to the Kingdom of Solomon is the legatee of Ancient Persia. By elevating Sultan Khalil to the rank of ancient kings, Davani writes that the palace became lit up with the splendour of the sultan, which eclipsed the palaces of Jamshid and Solomon. Davani’s account reveals that the visit was more than a simple execution of the memorial inscription, and it is possible to suppose that Persepolis was considered a spiritual station.⁵¹

These are testimonies to the inspirational effect of the ruins on new generations of Iranian rulers associating themselves with a long line of predecessors. It is clear that notwithstanding any loss of specific historical knowledge about the precise identity of the Achaemenid builders of the monuments at Persepolis, a crucial essence of its symbolic value was handed down over the centuries. This essence reinforced Persepolis as a place of spiritual resonance in Iranian traditions of noble greatness, transcending myriad social-political changes. These testimonies indicate that none of the rulers or princes who inherited Persian territories from the great Achaemenid kings was unfamiliar with the history of the country. Furthermore, the ruins at Persepolis bespeak the passage of these rulers and their admiration and fascination for the ruins. The inscriptions of Persepolis also bear witness to the fact that they all identified themselves as Iranian. As Melikian Shirvani has pointed out, the dialogues between the present and the past created by generations of rulers inscribing Persepolis—sometimes explicitly conscious of placing a new text close to an earlier one—created fugal themes, the harmonies of which enhanced one another.⁵² This notion has been at the heart of the resonance of the ruins with Iranian tradition. It reflects a very different approach to

51 Melikian Shirvani, “Le Royaume de Salomon”, *MII* 1, p. 29.

52 Melikian Shirvani, “Le Royaume de Salomon”, *MII* 1, p. 38.

monuments and history than that exercised by Western travellers. The Europeans sought positivistic, material-world connections with the palaces and personae of the Achaemenid Persian kings. The connections they sought were to an ancient Orient as they understood it

(rather uncritically in those days) from Classical and biblical sources.⁵³ The advent of the Safavids opened Iran to European travellers who were to re-discover the site in their own way, inscribing a different history and a different concept of history onto Persepolis.

53 Mousavi, "Persepolis in retrospect: histories of discovery and archaeological exploration at the ruins of ancient Parseh", *ArOr* 32, p. 214.

V

IN SEARCH OF PERSEPOLIS: WESTERN TRAVELLERS' EXPLORATIONS IN PERSIA

Tout est grand et saisissant d'ailleurs dans l'austère paysage qui sert d'encadrement à Takht-i-Djemchid: l'immensité de la plaine qui domine l'antique palais, les lignes majestueuses des montagnes dont l'aspect change à chaque pas, la pureté de l'atmosphère, l'azur d'un ciel profond, et jusqu'au silence de ces lieux habités.¹

It was with these words that Eugène Flandin, the celebrated French artist and traveller, conveyed the profound impact that Persepolis had upon him in more than one hundred fifty and years ago. He was neither the first nor the last visitor to be impressed by the ruins of Takht-e Jamshid, the beautiful citadel of a once vibrant city that stretched out across an expansive fertile plain in Fars. Situated on the natural route linking the Persian Gulf to the north of the Iranian plateau, Persepolis was an unavoidable station for travellers. Europeans who visited Persepolis from the fourteenth century onward have left us their passing comments or full-blown narratives, or occasionally a visual record. Among the accounts left by travellers who journeyed in Persia during the tumultuous years of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there are a few who record the name and location of a series of ruins that can be identified with those of Persepolis. Travels before the seventeenth century were usually occasioned by political circumstances of the time. The Mongol invasion of Persia in the early thirteenth century caused the establishment of the Ilkhans. Being in conflict with the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria, the Ilkhans were considered the natural allies of the West European kingdoms, and even a few attempts towards the formation of a Franco-Mongol alli-

ance were made between the courts of Western Europe and the Ilkhans of Persia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.² During the reign of Hulagu (1255-1265), one of the most powerful of the Ilkhans, there was a relative tolerance toward religious minorities that encouraged West European missionaries to set out for the East.

EARLY JOURNEYS TO THE RUINS OF CHELMENAR

The general opinion is that the earliest European mention of the ruins dates to the first half of the fourteenth century. It was by a northern Italian Catholic Friar, Odoric of Pordenone, who set out on a long journey to the East in 1313, at the time when a significant extension of missionary activities was taking place. Odoric recorded the name of the place as Comerum, "which formerly was a great city, and in the olden time did great scathe to the Romans. The compass of its walls is a good fifty miles; and there be therein palaces yet standing entire, but without inhabitants."³ Alfons Gabriel, the Austrian scholar and explorer, wrote that Comerun was a corrupted form of Kenareh, a small village near the ruins.⁴ It should be noted, however, that Comerum might also be a corrupted form of Kazerun, then a small village near the ruins of the Sasanian city of Bishapur.⁵ The name has been recorded in various forms (Comerum, Coprium, Comum, etc.), and all commentators agree that the identification of the place men-

1 Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. 2, p. 149.

2 Lockhart, "The relations between Edward I and Edward II of England and the Mongol Il-Khans of Persia", *Iran* 6, pp. 25-26.

3 Odorico da Pordenone, *The Travels of Friar Odoric*, p. 72.

4 Gabriel, *Die Erforschung Persiens*, pp. 40-41.

5 Shahbazi suggests that Comerum is a corruption of Komehr = Kuh-e Mehr or Kuh-e Rahmat ("From Parsa to Taxt-e Jamšid", *AMI* 10, p. 206).

tioned remains uncertain.⁶ Odoric's account hardly impressed the general knowledge of the Europeans with the antiquities of Persia.

The name *Chelmenar* was first recorded in the fifteenth century. The Sasanian name *Sad-Sotun* had fallen in oblivion by the time when Giosafat Barbaro, a Venetian ambassador and merchant visited the Tomb of Cyrus and the ruins at Persepolis in 1474. His description of the ruins is vague and devoid of any significant information. Being unaware of what he was visiting, he thought he had seen biblical figures on the reliefs and sculptures of Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam.⁷ Barbaro's description is unimportant, but his notes may have fallen into the hands of Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), a Bolognese architect who, in his celebrated treatise, *De Architectura*, gave a drawing of the façade of an edifice which he had heard was supported by a hundred columns. Serlio presented a conjectural restoration of a hypostyle hall, which is not certain to have been representative of one of the buildings at Persepolis.⁸

The advent of the Safavids in the early sixteenth century brought back political stability and security to Persia. The search for new markets and trade routes in the East was probably the origin of the intensification of European travels to the Safavid kingdom. Shah Abbas encouraged political and economic relations with the West; and foreign envoys found welcome at his court.⁹ The supremacy of Portuguese naval forces in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean and the establishment of the East India Company in 1600 by the British brought the Dutch and French to the scene of rivalries in the East. It is in such a context that adventurers like Anthony and Robert Shirley, Pietro Della Valle and many others in quest of

wealth, fame, and a better life took the route to Persia.¹⁰ Consequently, Persia became the frequent resort of travellers, diplomats, and missionaries. It was in this period that the antiquity of Persepolis and its identification as an historical site were established. The earliest extant visual documents of the site in the form of drawings and sketch plans appeared at this point.

Whereas the attempts made by Christian missionaries in the East were unsuccessful, a large number of Roman Catholic friars, particularly Carmelites, visited Persia in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was part of the policy advocated by Philip II of Spain (1527-1598) in defence of the Roman Catholic Church against the Protestantism and also to counter the nascent British influence in Persia.¹¹ As a result, the Viceroy of Goa received orders to send an appropriate envoy to the court of the Safavids to try to establish political and commercial relations with Persia. The envoy was amiably received by the king in Isfahan, and he set out for home in the company of a Persian envoy to the court of Spain, but their ship sank somewhere off the coast of Africa and never reached Spain.¹²

The Spanish made another attempt at establishing political relations with the Safavids. In response to the embassy of Anthony Sherley and Hussayn-Ali Beg, which Shah Abbas had sent to Europe in 1599, Philip III instructed the Viceroy in Goa to send a second mission to Isfahan. This mission included the Portuguese Augustinian friar Antonio de Gouvea, who was the Rector of the College of Goa and a professor of Theology.¹³ The party landed in Hormuz early in 1602, and set out for Isfahan, but turned aside from the direct route to visit the ruins at Chelmenar, which Gouvea

6 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through travellers' eyes", *AchHist* VII, p. 3, note 5.

7 Barbaro and Contarini, *Travels to Tana and Persia*, London, 1873, p. 81.

8 Booth, who discusses Serlio's drawing in detail, does not believe that it represents any particular building among the ruins in Persepolis (Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, pp. 10-11.); Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through travellers' eyes", *AchHist* VII, p. 7, and note 11.

9 Eskandar Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas (Tārikh-e Alamārā-ye Abbāsi)*, p. xvii.

10 Gabriel, *Die Erforschung Persiens*, pp. 64-68.

11 Alonso, *Antonio de Gouvea. Diplomático y visitador apostólico en Persia*, p. 22.

12 Gabriel, *Die Erforschung Persiens*, p. 93.

13 Gabriel, *Die Erforschung Persiens*, pp. 93-94.

believed to be the sepulchre of an old king. The friar dedicated three pages of his account to the description of the ruins. He also wrote that the remains on the platform were an early site for Shiraz, and that the ancient site of Persepolis was to be sought in Shiraz.¹⁴ He mentioned the two rock-cut tombs on the slope of the mountain as those of Artaxerxes and his queen. He described the monumental staircase leading to the Terrace, and also the Gate of All Lands which he called a Porch ‘adorned with figures of savage animals cut out of a single block, and so lifelike that they appear as though they desired to excite fear’. He then wrote on the northern staircase of the Apadana, the sides of which were adorned with figures in relief, so well made that he doubted “if it were possible to execute them better”. He described the building on the platform as a series of “chapels”. Gouvea also called attention to the inscriptions which, he thought, contained “a forgotten form of writing”. Gouvea complained about the destruction of the monuments, and wrote that the villagers of the area, who had been annoyed by the large number of foreign visitors, had damaged the reliefs and structures, but that the monument survived because of its solidity.¹⁵

John Cartwright of England, who travelled across Iran in the first decade of the seventeenth century, mentioned the site of Persepolis and its history as related in Classical sources. Cartwright gave a fantasist description of ruins in the vicinity of Shiraz. It is, however, certain that he described the ruins of Chelmenar, probably without having visited them himself.¹⁶

On his return to Europe, Gouvea had the occasion to meet with the Spaniard Don Garcia de Silva Figueroa (1550-1624), and to interest him in the ruins of Chelmenar. In consideration of his trip to Persia, Figueroa made a special study of the history of the country.

He was a Castilian of high rank, and aged about fifty-seven years at the time of his journey. In 1614, Philip III sent Figueroa as ambassador to the court of Shah Abbas the Great. Irritated by the appointment of a Spaniard, the Portuguese authorities in Goa threw obstacles in his way, and detained him in Goa for three years. The ambassador finally hazarded the voyage to Hormuz in a small vessel, and reached the Persian Gulf in October 1617. He remained in Persia until 1619, dealing with matters related to the conflict between the Safavids and Ottomans and also to Portuguese control over the Strait of Hormuz, but without achieving the desired results. He collected rare art objects from places he visited although their present location is unknown. Figueroa never reached home; it is not clear whether he died at sea during his return or after landing in Lisbon. Figueroa’s original account in Latin of his mission to Persia was lost, but notes provided by the secretary of the mission helped to reconstruct the manuscript that is now preserved at the National Library in Madrid. This memoir contains a great deal of geographical, ethnographical, and historical information. Figueroa carefully described places that he visited such as Shiraz, Kashan, Qazvin, and Qom, and the caravanserais at which he stayed. He also gave interesting information on the religious minorities of Iran. With regard to Persepolis, he gave a detailed description of the site, and made a copy of its cuneiform inscriptions which has unfortunately been lost. He was also the first to have produced drawings of the reliefs and sculptures at Persepolis. When Figueroa visited Persepolis in the seventeenth century he had a copy of Diodorus at hand. He would have read Diodorus’ version of the violent sacking and burning of the city as retribution for the Persian invasion of Greece (Diodorus XVII.70-72). He rightly identified the ruins at Chelmenar as the

14 This opinion was expressed by the Carmelite Friars in Shiraz at the time of Mandelslo’s visit (Olearius, *Suite de la Relation du voyage*, p. 88).

15 Gouvea, *Relaçam em que se trata das Guerras*, p. 32. See also Gouvea’s description in Alonso, *Antonio de Gouvea. Diplomático y visitador apostólico en Persia*, p. 32.

16 His book, *The Preachers Travels*, was published in 1611. His description of the ruins can be found in Invernizzi’s *Il Genio Vagante*, p. 174.

ancient city of the Persians mentioned by Classical authors: "The most remarkable [thing] is that the building, which is divided into different parts in an expanded open area and is enclosed by a fortified wall, represents the real appearance of the royal residence and fortress of Persepolis, of which so many memoirs have been written by ancient authors of prime class, relating the conquest of the great Persian empire by Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia".¹⁷ Figueroa noticed the irregularities in the surface of the platform, which he attributed to the exigencies of defence, and wrote that the "double staircase leading to the platform is so constructed that one can easily ride up on horseback". He described the northern staircase of the Apadana (or the Columnar Edifice) as an "extremely beautiful staircase, which though not so large or so elevated as the first, is of far greater beauty and elegance, having on the walls and balustrade a triumph procession of men curiously clothed. At one extremity of the procession we see a chariot drawn by horses, in which there is an altar from whence a flame of fire is seen to rise. At the other end are represented fighting animals such as a ferocious lion attacking a bull, so well preserved, even in details, that art can add nothing to its perfection".¹⁸ Figueroa continued his tour by describing the Palace of Darius, and was impressed by the perfection and vivacity of the bas-reliefs. He observed inscriptions and wrote that the characters were wholly unknown, and "more ancient than those of the Hebrews, Chaldeans and Arabians". He noticed the two rock-cut tombs on the side of the mountain, and described the figures on their façade. He also discussed the significance of the writings of Diodorus of Sicily, Arrian, and Strabo, and concluded that the site he visited was among

the wonders of the ancient world: "We can thus presume that the everlasting relics of Chilmimar, that is the city of Persepolis, are among the least known and isolated monuments of the East, and are much older than others known in the world".¹⁹ From what he writes in one of his letters, Figueroa seems to have visited the ruins before the deliberate defacement of a large number of sculptures undertaken by the Safavid governor of Shiraz probably in the early seventeenth century.²⁰

Notwithstanding the wondrous and artificial exactness of the worke, the beautie and elegancy of it, shining out of the proportion and symmetric, doth dazle the eyes of the beholders. But nothing amazed me more than the hardnesse and durableness of these Marbles and Jaspers: for in many places there are Tables so solide, and so curiously wrought and polished, that yee may see your face in them, as in a glasse. Besides the Authors, by me alreadie commended; Arrianus and Justine make speciall mention of this Palace: and they report, that Alexander the Great (at the instigation of Thais, a famous Whore of Athens) did burne it downe.

Till Figueroa's notes nothing certain was known in Europe concerning these remarkable ruins. He also brought an artist with him who produced the first real representations of sculptures at Persepolis. The greater importance of Don Garcia's visit was the copy of a whole line of the large inscription which is on the staircase in the centre of the triumphal procession; the copy was lost and never reproduced either in French or Spanish version of his memoir.²¹ The engraving, long thought lost, has recently been discovered and published.²²

At the time when Figueroa was staying in Persia, a Roman aristocrat and adventurer named Pietro Della Valle was travelling in the country. Della Valle was one of the most re-

17 Figueroa, *Comentarios de Don García de Silva y Figueroa*, p. 392. I thank my brother, Mehdi Mousavi, who kindly translated these passages from the original text in Spanish.

18 Figueroa, *Comentarios*, pp. 378-379.

19 Figueroa, *Comentarios*, p. 391.

20 Figueroa, "A Letter from Don Garcia Silva Figueroa", *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. IX, p. 193.

21 Figueroa, *Comentarios*, p. 388; Gabriel, *Die Erforschung Persiens*, pp. 79-80.

22 Invernizzi, *Il Genio Vagante*, fig. 30; Cordoba, "Un caballero español en Isfahàn", *Arbor* 153/711-712, p. 647, fig. 1.

markable and educated travellers of the Renaissance, whose *Viaggi* is the best contemporary account of the lands between Istanbul and Goa in the early seventeenth century. Della Valle visited the ruins of Chelmenar in 1621. Equipped with a copy of Diodorus' book, he carefully described the ruins and reliefs in Letter XV to his friend, Mario Schipano. He noticed that the figures carved on the northern staircase of the Apadana were faced toward the centre of the staircase, and thought that the whole panel depicted the "procession of a sacrifice".²³ Della Valle's most important contribution was his copying of the cuneiform characters. He described the writing of the inscription, which covers the wall from top to bottom near the figure of the lion below the hall with pillars: "... the characters are utterly unknown, and no one has been able to tell the language in which they were written. All that I can say, is, that they are of prodigious size, not joined together to form a word, but separate...".²⁴ He copied five characters from several passages of the inscription XPb. He cautiously concluded that the characters were written from left to right, and gave his reasons for this view:²⁵

I have copied from among them, five of those which most frequently occur in the best manner I was able...I am induced to believe they were read from left to right, after our manner from the base being at the left, the point towards the right, and the point always being downwards, the same appears in the fourth character, composed of a single pyramidal figure sloping from left to right, and likewise in the small wedge-like figure [figure piramidali] in the middle of the third character. If it be objected that the pyramidal figure may begin from the point and not the base, in answer it may assumed, that if so, the point should begin at the top, and not the

base as is the case in every instance; since in all characters their beginning, the head, is universally from the upper and not the lower part. These, however, are merely conjectures of mine, which possibly may be wrong. I have further remarked, that all these characters are composed of the same wedge-like figures, and angular ones of a much smaller size, and that the number and position of these alone constitute the diversity of the letter.

During the winter of 1618, Della Valle met the old Spanish ambassador in Isfahan, and accepted Figueroa's identification of the ruins as the site of Persepolis, but he was not convinced that the monuments on the Terrace were palaces. He was more inclined to believe that the remains were originally designed for a great temple.²⁶

Five years after Della Valle, the ruins were visited by the Englishman, Thomas Herbert, who produced inaccurate and grotesque views of them in his travel account of 1638, which were probably drawn after his return to England.²⁷ Herbert's description of the ruins also contains absurd remarks and comparisons. He thought that the site was built by a Median ruler named Sosarmus, who put an end to the Assyrian monarchy. Herbert mentioned the inscriptions written "in [a] dozen lines of strange characters, very fair and apparent to the eye, but so mystical, so oddly framed, as no other Hieroglyphik, no other deep conceit can be more difficultly fancied..."²⁸ The astounding construction materials used for the Palace of Darius seem to have impressed the English traveller:²⁹

The walls here (as of the rest) were of black marble; but so incomparably polished and glazed, that we beheld it with admiration:

For several parts of it were as bright and splendent as Tuch or Steel-mirrou, so as we could very per-

23 Della Valle, *Viaggi*, vol. 2, pp. 251-252.

24 Della Valle, *Viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 252.

25 Della Valle, *Viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 253. The English translation has been adapted from J. Pinkerton (ed.), *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels*, vol. 9, p. 104. For the French translation of his description of Persepolis, see *Voyages de Pietro Della Vallé, gentilhomme romain*, vol. 5, Rouen, 1745, pp. 319-320. The copy of the cuneiform has been reproduced only in the original text in Italian.

26 Della Valle, *Viaggi*, vol. 2, p. 252.

27 Vickers, "The views of Persepolis by William Marshall and Wenceslaus Hollar in Sir Thomas Herbert's *Travels*", *AchHist* VII, figs. 1-2.

28 Herbert, *Some Years of Travels*, p. 141.

29 Herbert, *Some Years of Travels*, p. 143.

fectly see the reflex of our faces and bodies when we stood before it. In other some places the gold also was laid upon the Freez and Cornith, as also upon the trim of Vests, was also in as perfect lustre as if had been but newly done...

What is significant in Herbert's account is the description of the city's remains, including the large columned hall in the Southern plain, and the building known as the *Fratadara*. Herbert also reported on the destruction of the sculptures by villagers and peasants who defaced the bas-reliefs, and cut up the fine polished slabs of marbles to make headstones for graves and benches. As the result of Herbert's report, Lord Thomas Arundell of Wardour sent out a young artist to draw the monuments; but he died before reaching Persia.³⁰

Among the travellers of the first half of the seventeenth century, one should mention Heinrich von Poser, a well-educated German of Silesia, who travelled in Persia between 1621 and 1624. His description of Persepolis, which he visited in May 1624, interestingly reveals the prevailing mythological interpretation of the site. He was told that the animal figures had been created by magic and that the site had been built by the mythical king of Persia, Jamshid. Von Poser's visit was only six years after that of Figueroa, but the German was apparently unaware of the Spaniard's identification of the site. With his knowledge of Greek and Latin, von Poser was fully acquainted with Classical authors such as Arrian and Plutarch, and with he attempted to retrieve some information from the inhabitants of the area. He first noted that since, according Plutarch, Cyrus the Great had gotten his name from the sun, and that the second part of the name Jamshid meant *sun* in Persian, the two monarchs might have been identical; then he refuted the idea by writing that "Jamshid reigned six hundred years requested God that nobody dies or becomes sick; such things have not been heard from Cyrus' reign".³¹ The sig-

nificance of von Poser lies in the fact that he was among the very few Europeans whose account of the ruins appealed to the local tradition of conceiving of the ruins as a mythical place. This reveals that what Tabari and other medieval historians had written centuries before still obtained in the early seventeenth century.

Other Europeans who recorded their visit to the site in the first half of the seventeenth century were two members of an embassy sent out by Duke Frederick III of Schleswig-Holstein in 1633, the first German trading mission to Persia: Adam Oelschläger (Olearius), mathematician and Orientalist, who left a comprehensive account of Russia and Persia, and Johann Albrecht von Mandelslo who went to see Persepolis and Pasargadae in 1638. Mandelslo visited Pasargadae and described the Tomb of Cyrus as being "in a little chapel, built of white marble, upon a high square of free stonework".³² David Stronach is not convinced of the accuracy of Mandelslo's "engaging, but free illustration of the tomb" because the German added that the "air and rain have eaten into the wall [of the tomb chamber] in several places".³³ It is quite possible that the description refers to numerous holes that have been made in later times in order to extract the iron and lead dovetail clamps used in the masonry. Mandelslo, whose description of the site was completed by his friend, Olearius, had heard that the ruins of Chelmenar were the deed of Jamshid: "These are the ruins of an old fortress that the Persians call Chelmenar... They are without doubt the remains of one of the most superb monuments ever constructed; and the Persians say that their king, Jamshid, maternal ancestor of Alexander the Great had this fortress built, while others say that King Solomon built it, and there are even those who attribute it to Darius, the last king of Persia".³⁴ Mandelslo left his grafitto on the Gate of All Lands. Mandelslo's account was pub-

30 Ferrier, "Charles I and the antiquities of Persia: the mission of Nicholas Wilford", *Iran* 8, p. 52.

31 Quoted in Arndt, *Persepolis*, p. 103.

32 Olearius, *Suite de la Relation du voyage en Moscovie, Tartarie et Perse*, vol. 2, p. 87.

33 Cf. Stronach, *Pasargadae*, p. 1.

34 Olearius, *Suite de la Relation du Voyage en Moscovie, Tartarie et Perse*, p. 88.

lished posthumously by Olearius. Josef Wiesehöfer's study of Mandelslo's travel journal shows that his account was written and completed largely by Olearius who used other travellers' accounts such as those by Figueroa and Herbert.³⁵

THE TRAVELLERS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Jean Chardin (1643-1713), the celebrated French jeweller, traveller, and explorer, gave the most conspicuous description of the ruins of Persepolis in the seventeenth century (fig. 5.1). He was the wealthy son of a jeweller, who became fascinated with Persia early in life. Chardin personifies the most distinguished of those travellers who journeyed in Persia during the late seventeenth century. Naturally, Chardin's initial motivation was to acquire information to promote the prospects for trade between Persia and France, part of the general commercial policy of Colbert for enhancing French economic prosperity.³⁶ Yet he was an admirable example of the eager traveller who wished to share with others his excitement, disappointment, discoveries and experiences in the East. He had a keen knowledge of the Classical authors' writings and of the work of medieval geographers as well. He had read the accounts left by other travellers such as Figueroa and Della Valle.³⁷ He expressed his delight at wandering over the beautiful plain of Marvdasht in the company of Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus and other classical authors.³⁸ He also learned Persian and became interested in the history of the country. His sympathetic relationship to contemporary Persia and its traditions was multifaceted, informed in interesting ways by his religious inclinations, his French Huguenot background



FIG. 5.1 Portrait of Jean Chardin (1643-1713) from the frontispiece of his *Voyages*.

(which marginalized him in his native land), and his eagerness to learn about the Islamic faith.³⁹ He made two voyages to Persia. The second, begun in 1671, took two years of difficult journeying through Ottoman Turkey, the Crimea, and the Caucasus to reach Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid kingdom. He spent four years there prior to returning to France in 1677. Following the persecution of Protestants in France, which was enforced by the Edict of Nantes, Chardin decided to go to England. He was then appointed Jeweller to the Crown, and was later knighted by Charles II to become Sir John Chardin. He died in the

35 Wiesehöfer, "Ist ein alt, verfallen Schloss': Johan Albrecht von Mandelslo in Pasargadai und Persepolis", *AchHist* XI, pp. 16-17.

36 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, p. 1.

37 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, p. 17.

38 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, pp. 242-243.

39 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, p. 97.

neighbourhood of London, in 1713, at the age of sixty-nine.⁴⁰

Chardin visited Persepolis on three occasions in 1667, 1673, and 1674, twice accompanied by a painter.⁴¹ On his third visit, he took Guillaume-Joseph Grelot, a trained draughtsman and painter, to Persia. Before Chardin, André Daulier-Deslandes had published the first panoramic view of the site.⁴² Chardin's beautiful panoramic views were made after the sketches of Grelot. With the help of Grelot, he was the first to make a plan of the site. Grelot's drawings enabled Chardin to relate his description to the illustrations and plans, which offered a better understanding of the location of various structures on the Terrace of Persepolis.⁴³

Chardin was fascinated with the site, and with the location of the ruins set on one side of a broad plain that he described as "the most beautiful, the liveliest, the richest, and the most fertile that could be seen." Then, he goes on describing the setting in an eloquent French prose:⁴⁴

La plaine où cette superbe ville étoit bâtie, est effectivement une des plus belles qu'on puisse voir... On y nourrit les plus beaux chevaux de la Perse; on y fait le plus excellent vin; on en tire les meilleurs fruits et le plus gras bétail. Le fleuve Araxe, la partie rivière de Pulouar et mille ruisseaux l'arrosent presque partout d'un bout à l'autre.

Quand on est entré dans la plaine, on prend à gauche vers l'orient, le long des montagnes, qui sont partout de roche vive et assez haute; et après cinq lieues de marche, on arrive aux plus superbes et plus fameuses mesures de l'antiquité, que l'on appelle les ruines de Persépolis. Ces magnifiques restes

paroissent de loin comme une espèce d'amphithéâtre, parce que la montagne s'enfoncé en demi-lune comme pour l'embrasser.

Chardin profoundly appreciated the magnificence of the ruins even though many of his interpretations of their purpose were faulty.⁴⁵ He described the buildings and structures in referring to the illustrations of his book. He discussed the different motifs and reliefs at the site and their iconography, and sometimes he argued against his predecessors' opinions on the identification and origin of the reliefs at Persepolis. Chardin was, however, convinced that the site was not a palace, but that the whole Terrace of Persepolis served religious purposes, with the Apadana being the ritual heart of the temple. He gave a series of arguments in defence of what he advanced, the most plausible of which was that "in ancient times palaces were not built on mountains, but on the banks of rivers, for the benefit of refreshing air." He also attempted to justify his opinion by seeing the reliefs on the staircase of the Apadana as the procession of a sacrifice, because each figure carries sacrifices. Chardin was also intrigued by the rock-cut tombs on the slope of the mountain at Persepolis, and described in detail the monuments and discussed their function. He concluded: "By tradition the local people think that the legendary king, Nimrud, is buried in the first tomb and that Darius whom they call Dara in the second".⁴⁶

Chardin's view of the inscriptions engraved on different walls of the Palace of Darius is

40 See Langlès' introduction to his edition of Chardin's *Voyages*, p. XV. For a full account of Chardin's life and different editions of his travel book, see his more accessible biography by Emerson, "Chardin, Sir John", *Enclr.*, vol. 5, pp. 369-377.

41 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, p. 155; Van der Cruysse, *Chardin le Persan*, p. 104.

42 Daulier-Deslandes, *Les Beautés de la Perse*, opposite page 56.

43 Being in disagreement with Chardin's demanding terms, Grelot accepted Ambrosio Bembo's commission to provide sketches of ancient monuments near Persepolis (Bembo, *The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo*, pp. 27-28, pp. 309, fig. 19). The best copies of his panoramic drawings were, however, published in Chardin's book. He gave his second copies to Bembo (Invernizzi, "El testimonio de Ambrogio Bembo y Joseph Guillaume Grelot sobre los restos arqueológicos iraníes", *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Madrid, April 3-8, 2006, p. 209).

44 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 243.

45 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, pp. 155-164.

46 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 317.

both interesting and surprising. He recognized that the cuneiform inscriptions were the oldest of all the inscriptions, going back to the time of the construction of the monument. He thought that the inscriptions in Pahlavi were written with Syriac characters, and he wrote that there were inscriptions in Greek and Arabic. Chardin made another important observation: the cuneiform inscriptions carved on the window frames of the Palace of Darius were inlaid with gold, something that was observed by both Herbert and Kaempfer. Indeed, the other cuneiform inscriptions of the site may also have been inlaid with precious metals, traces of which were still visible in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷

...cet ancien caractère est admirablement bien formé. On y voit de petites et de grandes lettres; il y en a qui ont bien trois pouces de grandeur. L'on dirait que ces lettres auroient été dorées; car il y en a plusieurs, et surtout des majuscules, où il paroît encore de l'or; et c'est assurément quelque chose d'admirable et d'inconcevable, que l'air n'ait pu manger cette dorure durant tant de siècles.

The subterranean canals at Persepolis were another peculiarity of the ruins, which astounded the French traveller who, with extreme difficulties, endeavoured to explore them. The report of his exploration is interesting:⁴⁸

On y entre par des crevasses fort étroites, qui se sont faites, ou par la longueur du temps qui vient à bout de tout, ou par l'effort de quelque tremblement de terre, ou par ceux-là mêmes à qui l'espérance de trouver des trésors a fait venir l'envie d'ouvrir et de fouiller les tombeaux. Ces canaux sont si bas et si étroits qu'on a beaucoup de peine à y marcher, et qu'on ne se peut tenir droit qu'en quelques endroits.

L'on m'avoit tant assuré qu'il menoit à des tombeaux, à des caves, à des chambres souterraines, que je m'engageai, au peril de la vie, à les suivre, mais je ne rencontrai rien de tout cela.

With the primitive means and equipment available to him, Chardin entered into seven tunnels of the subterranean system of canals,

but was unable to explore them in full. Most of them were obstructed by fallen debris; lack of air and light was another obstacle. He reported that there were a number of animal bones scattered on the floor of the tunnels. He seemed to admire the construction materials of these tunnels, but was amazed about the purpose of such structures on his first visit: "Who did cut and build these paths, where a slender man of twenty as I am cannot get into even by crawling?" In the narrative of his second visit to the site in 1673 he wrote again about his exploration of the tunnels in the company of "a knowledgeable and curious Persian nobleman," who told him that there were also large tunnels where he could go in and walk for three to four kilometres. This is why he set out for another adventurous search in the tunnels:⁴⁹

Je fis bonne provision de chandelle et d'eau-de-vie, et je pris avec moi trois hommes bien résolu de courir l'aventure, sous promesse à chacun d'un ca-laat (khil'at); c'est un habit complet depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds; c'est la récompense ordinaire que l'on fait à ses sujets, ou à ses serviteurs, pour un service important. Je trouverai ce chemin environ deux pieds plus profond en terre que les autres, et assez large, de façon qu'on y pouvoit aller droit et à l'aise. La taille ou le ciseau m'en parut aussi bien qu'aux autres, et le plancher couvert de terre comme dans les précédens. J'y marchai trente-cinq minutes, et y fit environ un quart de lieue. Nous mettions des chandelles allumées de cinquante en cinquante pas, et au bout de trois cents pas, je laissai un homme pour nous attendre; j'en posai un autre à deux cents pas plus avant, parce que je rencontrai un carrefour avec trois rues devant moi, et deux à côté, ce qui faisoit une manière d'étoile où j'eusse pu me perdre au retour. Si ceux qui ont pensé que ces canaux étoient faits pour porter de l'eau, avoient pénétré dedans aussi avant que j'ai fait, ils auroient changé d'avis en voyant ce labyrinthe où l'eau n'auroit pu manquer de se perdre. Quand j'eus fait encore trois cents pas plus avant, le coeur manqua à mon valet; il s'écria qu'il s'affoiblissoit et qu'il n'en pouvoit plus. Je le priai, je lui fis des promesses, ce qui le fit avancer encore quelques pas; mais enfin il se laissa tomber, et me demanda si piteuse-

47 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 321. Daulier-Deslandes made the same observation (*Les Beautez de la Perse*, p. 61). Curzon discussed the matter and gave a list of the travellers who detected traces of gold inlays in his *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, p. 171.

48 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 328.

49 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, pp. 331-332.

ment pourquoi j'exposois quatre hommes sans aucun profit, que je revins à moi-même, et considérai que quelque découverte que je pusse faire, cela ne méritoit pas d'entrer en compromis avec la vie que je courris risque de perdre le plus misérablement du monde. D'ailleurs, je commençois aussi à m'affoiblir et m'étourdir; le manquement d'air et de respiration m'oppressoit.

The lack of air and light prevented the French explorer from going deeper into the subterranean canals. He wrote that the place had a certain horror, without having actually seen anything horrific. He added that he had not been as lucky as Della Valle who claimed – rather confusingly – to have seen a large square chamber in marble with a single entrance, which, according to the Venetian traveller, was a sepulchre.⁵⁰

Chardin also described what could be seen from the rest of the ancient city of Persepolis in the surrounding plain:⁵¹

A trois cents pas de l'édifice, au coin oriental, il y a une colonne debout et entière, excepté le chapiteau, au milieu de beaucoup d'autres colonnes et d'autres pièces d'architecture renversées et brisées. Cette colonne est une des vingt qui sont demeurées entières, aux chapiteaux près. Elle est, comme les autres, de cet ordre d'architecture qu'on appelle *dorique*, à cause, dit-on, que Darius en a été l'auteur; mais on peut juger avec quelle ignorance cela se dit, et combien cette étymologie est éloignée de la vraisemblance, puisque ces colonnes et tout ce temple sont construits tant de siècles auparavant.

A trois lieux ou environ de ce temple, au coin de la montagne, il y a encore d'autres colonnes de la hauteur de celles-ci, mais qui sont d'une autre architecture, ayant le fût rond. On dit qu'il y en a encore à cinq lieux au-delà, mais je ne les ai pas vues. Je souhaiterois que quelque habile curieux qui n'eût point d'affaires, comme j'en avois en Perse, allât passer un été à Persépolis, à la découverte de toutes les ruines de cette fameuse ville.

Les gens du pays assurent que ces ruines s'étendent à plus de dix lieux à la ronde.

Chardin's description does not, unfortunately, provide the exact location of these ruins. The

first column “three hundred feet from the edifice” is probably the single extant column in the impressive Edifice ‘E’ located two to three hundred meters south-west of the platform.⁵² The other group of structures situated some three kilometres from Persepolis must be those in the ruined city of Istakhr, which had been taken away from Persepolis and transported to Istakhr probably in the tenth century. Chardin's mention of other ruins is vague, but points out that the whole region was dotted with ruins of the Achaemenid period.

Chardin attributed the real destruction of reliefs and statues to Arab conquerors who despised the representation of the human figure. He also wrote that Shah Abbas the Great sent stonecutters to acquire stones from the ruined structures and brought them to Isfahan to be used for his construction activities. His commander-in-chief, Imam Qoli Khan, also had stones from Persepolis transferred to Shiraz for the construction of his new residence. Nevertheless, according to Chardin, the most destructive operation took place under Imam Qoli's successor, and after the death of Shah Abbas. At that time, the government was in charge of the expenses of foreign travellers and ambassadors once they were in the kingdom's territory. Each province had the responsibility of taking care of their living costs and accommodations. In a word, the more they stayed the higher were the costs for the provinces. Chardin reported that at some point the governor of Fars realized that the expenditure for the villages near the ruins of Chelmenar, particularly that of Istakhr, was surprisingly high. He then found out that the reason for such costs was that most of the European travellers wanted to stay days to see the curious ruins, and, naturally, the expenses for their sojourn had to be paid by the local administration. Thus, the governor sent a group of officials and workers to deface and damage

50 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 333.

51 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, pp. 318-319.

52 According to Daulier-Deslandes the column was 500 feet to the south of the Terrace. He mentions other standing columns, probably in the vicinity of Istakhr: “...à deux lieux delà à main gauche il y en a trois que l'on croit avoir servi à une des portes de la ville de Persépolis, suppose qu'elle ait esté là” (*Les Beautés de la Perse*, p. 64).

the structures and reliefs at Chelmenar, which were considered the cause of such a high financial burden for the province.⁵³ As Ferrier wrote, Chardin was one of the first to fully appreciate the majesty, history and art of the achievement of Persepolis and to convey it to a wide readership.⁵⁴

During Chardin's first journey to Persia, Persepolis was visited by another Frenchman, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier. In contrast to Chardin, Tavernier expressed a disdain for the site "where there are to be seen a great number of old columns, some standing, some lying upon the ground, and some ill-shaped statues with little square dark rooms".⁵⁵ The significance of Tavernier's visit lies in the fact that he was accompanied by Philip Angel, a Dutch painter and draughtsman, who apparently shared his French comrade's dislike for Persepolis. He spent eight days drawing the ruins and then complained that he had wasted his time because the monuments were not worth drawing. He had arrived in Persia around 1651 with an embassy of the Dutch East India Company in order to teach Shah Abbas II the art of drawing.⁵⁶ It may well be that Angel's renderings of the ruins at Persepolis were in fact produced on the order of Shah Abbas II. Certainly if his distaste for them was as total as Tavernier suggests, he would not have spent eight days on the task without the pressure of a very important obligation. This implies that the Safavid king was eager to place himself into a relationship with the ruins of Takht-e Jamshid through production of a visual record of the site that would bear his stamp of patronage.

A few years after Chardin, Engelbert Kaempfer, a German naturalist, physician and traveller, visited the ruins in 1686. Kaempfer had already made important contributions to science through his long residence in Japan, where he had studied botany and then the manners, customs, and history of that then-unknown land. He described two buildings as Structure I (the Gate of All Lands) and II (probably the Apadana).⁵⁷ His contribution to the architectural study of the ruins of Chelmenar was insignificant compared to his interest in the inscriptions at the site. Kaempfer was the first to call the characters of Persepolitan inscriptions "cuneatae", and coined the name "cuneiform" that is now commonly applied to them: "On the south side, not far from the western corner, approximately 4 meters from the ground, there is an inscription, in strange letters, which have the form of wedges. Such one does not find anywhere otherwise in the world (except in the areas of the palace), and it has not been so far deciphered because one does not know its language...".⁵⁸ Kaempfer stayed three days at Persepolis, and produced five drawings of the site. In the short time available to him, he was capable of copying the whole of the twenty-four lines of the Babylonian version of the inscription on the southern wall of the platform known as DPg, which was by far the longest text that had yet been published in the West: "In reality the copying of a single inscription was such an incredibly wearisome labour, especially as the slabs are fixed so high up that one could not escape the sun. I was finally forced to abandon the idea of copying the other slabs".⁵⁹ He also copied the trilin-

53 Chardin, *Voyages*, vol. 8, p. 407.

54 Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia*, p. 164.

55 Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, p. 657.

56 It is possible that the drawing of the ruins published in François Valentijn's travel account was made by Philip Angel. In that case it should be the earliest preserved drawing of the ruins made on the spot (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through travellers' eyes", *AchHist* VII, p. 10).

57 An abstract of his description is translated into German: Meier, *Die Reisetagebücher Engelbert Kaempfers*, pp. 97-102.

58 Wiesehöfer, "Engelbert Kaempfer in Naqš-i Rostam und Persepolis", *AchHist* VII, p. 85.

59 "Inscriptionem exhibit, expressam characteribus peregrinis, formam habentibus cuneolorum" (*Amoenitates exoticae*, p. 331, translation is given in Detlef Haberland, *Engelbert Kaempfer 1651-1716: A Biography*, p. 46).



FIG. 5.2 Cornelis De Bruijn in 1711. Copper plate of Valck from the frontispiece of *Voyages de Corneille le Brun*.

gual inscription round a window in the Palace of Darius, which Chardin had already produced and published in a better quality.⁶⁰ Kaempfer favoured the opinion that the monument was a temple rather than a palace, and he considered that the columns were to support a roof.

Cornelis De Bruijn (1652-1726), a Dutch painter and traveller, who visited the ruins in 1704, produced the best visual documents of the ruined structures and reliefs at Persepolis in the late Safavid period (fig. 5.2). De Bruijn

was a trained painter, and showed a keen interest in foreign countries and travel. His drawings caused a sensation, and were the best representations available in Europe until the far better and accurate engravings produced by Flandin and Coste two centuries later. With the financial support of Nicolaes Witsen, a man of science and politics, the mayor of Amsterdam and a fellow of the Royal Society of England, De Bruijn set out for the East.⁶¹ The motivation for De Bruijn's travels in the East is not quite known, but he was apparently attracted by painting landscapes and collecting "curiosities." He arrived in Persia in 1703. The usual destination of travellers in the country of that time was the splendid city of Isfahan, and from there he travelled to Persepolis with Adriaan de Backer, an agent of the Dutch East India Company in Isfahan. They scratched their names in the Gate of All Lands (fig. 5.3). De Bruijn stayed longer at Persepolis to take measurements of the structures and made drawings, of which he was proud: "The reader may judge of my proceeding, by the number and beauty of the plates distributed through the whole work, and which are executed with all possible justice and accuracy". De Bruijn's drawings were later questioned in Holland. For that reason Gisbert Cuper wrote to De Bruijn, asking him to explain why there were differences between his pictures of Persepolis and the illustrations by Chardin and Kaempfer. De Bruijn published a small book, *Aenmerkingen Over de Printverbeeldingen van de Overblijfselen van het Oude Persepolis* (*Remarks about the Illustrations of the Ruins of Ancient Persepolis, Amsterdam, 1714*).⁶² He explained why those travellers were wrong in their visual representation of the ruins because they did not know so much about drawing and had not spent enough time at the site to draw the ruins:⁶³

60 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 71.

61 Drijvers, "Cornelis de Bruijn and Gisbert Cuper. A skilled artist and a learned discussion", *AchHist* VII, p. 90.

62 Drijvers, "Cornelis de Bruijn and Gisbert Cuper. A skilled artist and a learned discussion", *AchHist* VII, p. 92.

63 Le Bruyn, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 3.

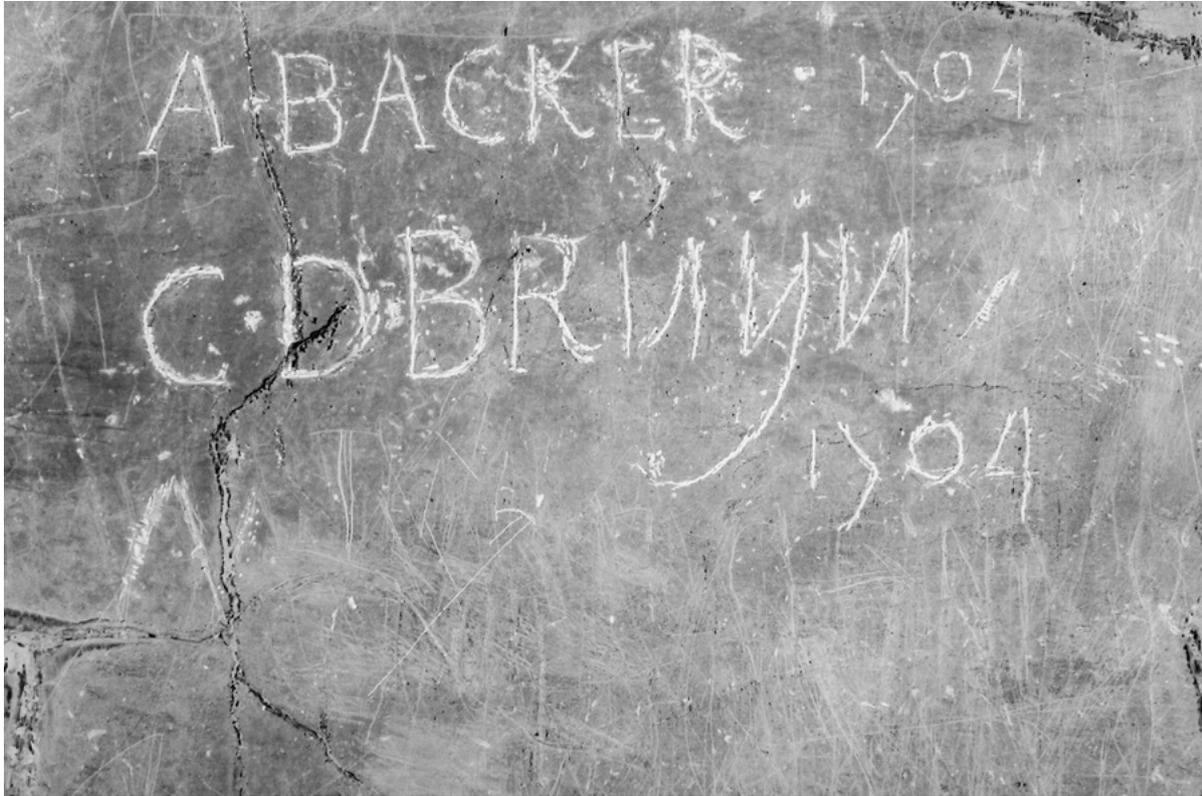


FIG. 5.3 De Bruijn's graffiti at the Gate of All Lands, 1704.

I say much the same of Persia, and the august ruins of the ancient palace of Persepolis, of which several travellers have published descriptions, without a due examination of what they saw. For which reason their accounts have more the air of a romance, than of any reality, or compleat [*sic*] knowledge of those fine antiquities, which is not to be obtained without pains and a peculiar application of thought; and when these are wanting an author must inevitably fall into errors, and lead others into the same. Pietro Della Valle, and Don Garcia de Silva de Figueroa, ambassador from Spain at the court of Abas I. King of Persia, are the first who have treated of these famous ruins with any solidity. And yet it evidently appears, by the relation the former has given of his travels, and by the account which the latter has published of his embassy, that neither of them continued long enough at Chelminar, to examine and trace out all the antiquities and curiosities of that place, with the circumspection that was requisite, and therefore we need not be surprised, if they express themselves in a superficial manner, and sometimes at random, on that subject...

De Bruijn's exact copies of the wedge-shaped characters were to be useful for the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions some hundred years later:

As to the other characters of great antiquity, they are no longer known, and I made several ineffectual attempts to obtain a discovery of their meaning, without being able to find any person, who could decipher a single letter. This disappointment, however, did not prevent me from being at the pains to copy them exactly, in hope of meeting with some priest among the Guebres, who could afford me some light with relation to them, and the event shall be related at large in the sequel of this work.

To produce accurate drawings was not De Bruijn's only preoccupation at Persepolis. He informs us that he also attempted to remove sculptured fragments:⁶⁴

My ardent desire to examine these superb ruins with the greatest care, and to render them more

64 Le Bruyn, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 23-24.

known to the curious than they had been till then, caused me to send for a stonecutter of Zie-raes [Ziareh], or Chiras, whose assistance I had occasioned for in the execution of my design; the hardness of the rocks having blunted all the chisels I had brought from Ispahan, so that they were no longer useful to me.

This person however succeeded no better than myself, and all his instruments were soon reduced to the same condition as mine, though they were much larger and stronger. Notwithstanding which, my earnest desire to convey some of these precious antiquities into my native country, would not permit me to rest till I had cut off a fragment of a window, that was filled with characters ...

He brought away a number of fragments which he listed and illustrated in his book. He removed part of the inscription carved on the vertical folds of the garment of the figure of Darius in the west jamb of the southern doorway of the main hall of the Tachara.⁶⁵ Some of the pieces were, however, impossible to be detached because they “flew off in shivers” with the strokes of their tools. How many reliefs were destroyed during such pilfering is unknown. A German collector named Zacharias von Uffenbach, who visited De Bruijn in 1711, described how the latter had displayed the curiosities he had collected in his travels in a cabinet; among those curiosities were “exotic sculptures.” It seems that De Bruijn sold the sculptures which he had taken away from Persepolis, and nothing is known of the fate of those fragments.⁶⁶

The impact of the visits mentioned above was finally reflected in Europe's circles of academicians and antiquarians. Comte de Caylus, (1692-1765), the well-known French antiquarian and a great connoisseur of arts, who had a number of ancient Near Eastern works of art in his collection including the famous Vase of Xerxes, wrote a few remarks on Persepolis. In the sixth volume of his *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étruscanes, grecques et romaines*, published in Paris in 1764, he posed a series

of questions about the function of the ruins and their date of construction. He rejected the association of the ruins at Persepolis with the royal palaces of ancient Persia; he also discarded the idea of the ruins being a group of temples. As for the date of the constructions, he saw no reason to attribute them to the reign of Persian kings such as Cyrus, Darius or Xerxes. His presentation on Persepolis, given at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1758, ended in refuting all of his predecessors' theories, and in leaving “to others the honour of resolving such a difficult problem”.⁶⁷

The Safavid kingdom practically ended after the capture of Isfahan by the Afghans in 1722. Some fifteen years of wars, revolts, and foreign invasions ravaged the country until the rise of Nader Shah in 1736. It was not, however, until the middle of the eighteenth century that relative peace was established in southern Persia under the rule of Karim Khan, the founder of the Zand dynasty. These conditions favoured the resumption of exploratory visits to Persepolis, the results of which have subsequently had an outstanding impact on the development of archaeological studies.

This period is marked by the travels of the celebrated German explorer, Carsten Niebuhr (1733-1815), in the service of the Danish Crown. Niebuhr was born into a family of farmers of humble background in northern Germany. He received little methodical education, but he made an effort to get some lessons in geometry and cartography. To qualify himself for the work of a surveyor and geographer, he studied hard at mathematics for a year and a half before the expedition set out, and acquired a basic knowledge of Arabic. In 1755, Johann David Michaelis, a professor of Oriental languages at the university of Göttingen approached the court of Denmark to initiate the project of sending an expedition to the

65 Le Bruyne, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 22. The inscription is known as DPb and is now in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Schmitt, *CII*, p. 54).

66 Jan de Hond, “Cornelis de Bruijn (1652-1726/27): a Dutch painter in the East”, *Eastward Bound. Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, p. 63.

67 Invernizzi, *Il Genio Vagante*, pp. 483-484.

East in order to acquire some important manuscripts.⁶⁸ In the beginning of the year 1761, Frederick V of Denmark sent out an expedition composed of five scientists in order to explore Arabia the Blessed and the adjacent countries. The language, the natural history, and the local geography were the objects of their researches. Niebuhr was offered the occasion to join the expedition. Niebuhr was a careful observer and cartographer, and was motivated by a high sense of obligation to record the results of his observations. His works have long been classics on the geography, people, and antiquities of the lands that he visited. The expedition was perilous, and Niebuhr being the sole survivor, determined to return home, and to take in Persia and to follow the Tigris on his way to Europe. In Persia, he received courtesies from the English merchants settled in Bushehr and Shiraz, especially from a certain Mr. Hercules, the agent of the East India Company, in whose house he lived in Shiraz. Through Hercules' influence Niebuhr went on to Persepolis where he arrived on the 13th of March 1765, and remained till the 3rd of April.⁶⁹

According to Niebuhr's son, Barthold Georg Niebuhr, who was a renowned historian himself, nothing out of all that he saw in Asia attracted his anticipation so powerfully as Persepolis; he could not rest until he had reached it, and the last night saw him sleepless. The memory of these ruins remained ineffaceable all his life long, and became a perpetual world of enchantment to console the German traveller, when old and blind, until the eve of his death.⁷⁰ He remained three and a half weeks among the ruins, in the midst of desolation; and during this time, he laboured in taking the

measurements and drawings of the structures (fig. 5.4). Given his familiarity with Egyptian monuments, he made comparisons between what he could see at Persepolis and ancient Egypt, and thought that the presence of guardian figures – which he took as unicorns – at the Gate of All Lands could be compared with Egyptian temples. He concluded that the monuments at Persepolis served first as a temple that gradually became a residence for religious leaders.⁷¹ Niebuhr's art historical observations were more realistic. He cleared the western edge of the northern staircase of the Apadana, and corrected the drawings made by Chardin and De Bruijn. He also rightly noticed that the persons on the newly uncovered part of the reliefs were dressed alternatively in two types of costumes which were similar to the descriptions of the Persian dresses left by Classical authors. His other remark was that these two figures must have represented two high-ranked officials leading delegations.⁷² These figures, he said, represent "different nationals who bring tributes to their king, or different nationals who bring offerings to a temple".⁷³ He followed the instructions originally meant for von Haven (the philologist of the expedition, who had perished before reaching Persia), to copy old Arab and Oriental inscriptions.⁷⁴ He also resorted to make squeezes of the inscriptions and highlighting those he was working on with ink. The inscriptions which were on the higher parts of the walls could be distinctly traced only when the sun's rays fell upon them; some of them were engraved on polished surfaces of stone. Niebuhr's eyes already strained by his incessant work became dangerously inflamed, and this resulted years later in his loss of sight.⁷⁵ He provided the

68 Harbsmeier, "Before decipherment: Persepolitan hypotheses in the late eighteenth century", *Culture and History* 11, p. 29.

69 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, pp. 76-77.

70 Niebuhr, *The Life of Carsten Niebuhr*, p. 30.

71 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, pp. 122-123.

72 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, p. 132.

73 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, p. 130.

74 Michaelis, *Recueil de questions proposées à une société de savants*, p. XXXVIII.

75 Niebuhr, *The Life of Carsten Niebuhr*, p. 31.

first accurate and complete copies of the inscriptions that ever reached Europe. It is clear that he was aware of the scientific value of those signs; he also knew that three systems of characters were used in the inscriptions.⁷⁶ He deliberately copied the “simplest” of the three systems of writing, which is known as Old Persian. As Sir Wallis Budge rightly noted, to Niebuhr belongs the great credit of being the first to realize the possibility of the “simple” system being alphabetic.⁷⁷ He agreed with Della Valle that the inscriptions were to be read from left to right. Being the only survivor of his team, he was able to return home in

1767 bringing the fruit of his explorations. Niebuhr produced copies of some of the medieval inscriptions at Persepolis as well, which included their translation into French by Jean-François Rousseau, a French agent residing in Basra.⁷⁸ The results of Niebuhr’s visit to the ruins were published in the second volume of his amply illustrated travel account *Reisebeschreibung von Arabien und anderen umliegenden Ländern*, published in Copenhagen in 1778. The publication of Niebuhr’s account had significant repercussions among scientific circles in Germany, and towards the end of the eighteenth century, the interpretation of

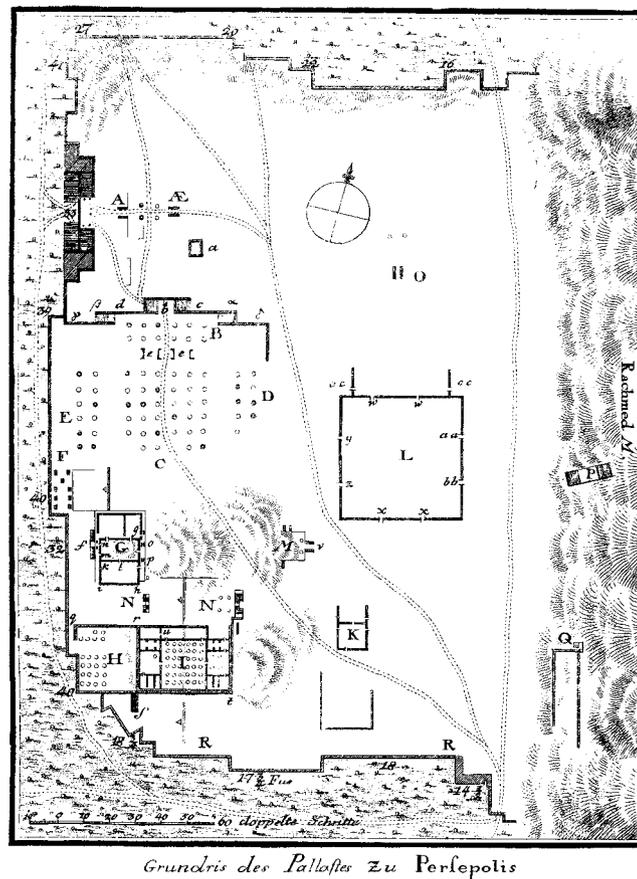


FIG. 5.4 Niebuhr’s plan of the ruins on the Terrace of Persepolis published in his *Reisebeschreibungen nach Arabien*.

76 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, p. 150.

77 Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, p. 22.

78 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, pp. 139-142, tab. 27.

the ruins of Persepolis fascinated a number of German historians, philosophers, and poets such as Johann Gottfried von Herder and Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren. Herder's study of the Oriental history, art and aesthetic resulted in a number of writings on the site. His *Persepolis: eine Muthmaassung* was published in Gotha in 1787, and later he published a series of sixteen *Persepolitan Letters (Persepolitische Briefe)*, in which he dealt with the inscriptions, reliefs and finally questions surrounding the function of the site. Herder's interpretation of the site was that the buildings were the palaces of Jamshid, on the walls of which was an allegorical representation of the actions of that king.⁷⁹ Heeren's work seems to correlate more with the state of knowledge on the site in the early nineteenth century. In an appendix to his voluminous *Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der alten Welt*, published in Göttingen in 1815, he rejected Herder's interpretations and theories on Persepolis.⁸⁰

In the same period, one should also mention the remarks on the ruins by another traveller whose authenticity has been doubted by other scholars. In the period of conflicts between the successors of Karim Khan and the nascent power of the Qajars, a Frenchman named Comte de Ferrières Sauveboeuf visited Persia in 1784-85. He apparently presented himself to the Shah as a precursor of the French envoy to Persia. What concerns our purpose here is certainly not his political mission, which he barely recounts. Instead, his comments on Persepolis, matching those of his fellow citizen

Tavernier, should be mentioned here for the sake of giving a comprehensive account of the Europeans' awareness of the importance of the ruins at Chelmenar. He writes in his *Mémoires historiques, politiques et géographiques* that the monuments at Persepolis "offers nothing to the view but a series of ruins, arches, supported by walls of extraordinary thickness, and a confused group of enormous and badly proportioned columns with capitals of maladroite workmanship." Then he adds: "Alexander may have regretted that Bacchanalian revel that caused the destruction of the Palace of Darius; yet, from what remains it does not seem that this vast and solid structure was a masterpiece."⁸¹ The remarks made by both Tavernier and Ferrières-Sauveboeuf have been criticized by other travellers and scholars such as De Bruijn, Langlès, and Ouseley, who questioned whether these two travellers even visited Persepolis.

Another extant account of the ruins during the tumultuous years which followed the death of Karim Khan Zand has been left by William Francklin (1763-1839), a British officer of the East India Company who spent eight months in Shiraz in the late years of the Zand period. He visited the ruins in 1787 in the company of a certain Mr. Jones, a deputy in the East India Company factory at Basra. Francklin scratched his name below Niebuhr's name at the Gate of All Lands.⁸² In a modest description of the ruins where he "refrained from entering into a diffusive account of this celebrated palace" he expressed his admiration as follows:⁸³

79 Harbsmeier, "Before decipherment: Persepolitan hypotheses in the late eighteenth century", *Culture and History* 11, pp. 43-55. A full review of Herders' studies on Persepolis is presented by H. Tafazoli, *Der deutsche Persien-Diskurs*, pp. 383-393.

80 I used the English translation of Heeren's work: *Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Principal Nations of Antiquity*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 401-414.

81 Comte de Ferrières-Sauveboeuf, *Mémoires historiques, politiques et géographiques des voyages du Comte de Ferrière-Sauveboeuf faits en Turquie, en Perse et en Arabie depuis 1782 jusqu'en 1789*, Paris, 1790, p. 35; the English translation is taken from Ouseley's *Travels*. Ouseley also criticized Tavernier and Ferrières Sauveboeuf for their comments on Persepolis.

82 Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, p. 31.

83 Francklin, *Observations made on a tour from Bengal to Persia, in the years 1786-7*, p. 207.

Indeed, every remains of these noble ruins indicate their former grandeur and magnificence, truly worthy of being the residence of a great and powerful monarch; and whilst viewing them, the mind becomes impressed with an awful solemnity!—When we consider the celebrity of this vast empire, once the patron of the arts and sciences, and the feat of a wise and flourishing government;—when we reflect on the various changes and revolutions it has undergone, at one period a field for the daring ambition of an Alexander,—at another for the enthusiastic valour of an Omar, we must consequently feel the strongest conviction of the mutability of all human events!

Busy with their internal conflicts, the Zands do not seem to have left any record of their passage at the site, but Francklin's account shows that the ruins were in the same state of preservation as they had been more than two decades before at the time of Niebuhr's visit. He interestingly reports that "Sadeq Khan's palace at Shiraz, were in the same style as those of Persepolis, and that the architecture of the present Persians was similar to that of ancient times".⁸⁴

84 Francklin, *Observations made on a tour from Bengal to Persia, in the years 1786-7*, p. 207, p. 227.

VI

PERSEPOLIS AND THE PUZZLE OF THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS

The method of writing by means of cuneiform characters was employed during a period of three thousand years in various parts of Western Asia. It is extraordinary that all knowledge of such a method of writing should disappear within a few hundred years after the fall of the Achaemenid empire in 330 B.C. The works of the Classical authors show that the learned Greeks and Romans possessed a considerable amount of information about the Persians, but none of them had direct knowledge about the cuneiform script in which were written the victories and exploits of the Achaemenid kings. Herodotus mentions that there were two memorial tablets prepared upon the order of Darius, of which one was covered with "Assyrian letters" (*Histories* IV. 87). Diodorus of Sicily says that the inscription on the Rock of Bisutun was written with "Syrian letters" (II. 13). Arrian quotes the inscription which was said to have been found on the Tomb of Cyrus and which was said to have been written in the Persian language and with Persian characters (*Anabasis*, VI. 29, 7, 8). An apocryphal letter of Themistocles speaks of golden censers inscribed with "Old Assyrian letters" and not with the "new letters that Darius had recently given to the Persians".¹ Thus, the Greeks and Romans did not recognize that the most significant characteristic of those inscriptions was a series of wedges, which were later called cuneiform. It is surprising to note that those Iranian historians and geographers like Istakhri and Hamdullah Mostowfi, who knew of the existence of the inscriptions at Bisutun, do not seem to have paid attention to the inscriptions at Persepolis.

In the nineteenth century, thanks to evidence collected from Persepolis, there was enough material in Europe to advance the progress of philology and epigraphy in connection with the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions. The ruins at Persepolis became the major source of a passionate archaeological endeavour of the time. As far back as the early seventeenth century, Figueroa and Della Valle had copied inscriptions at Persepolis, an account of which was given in the previous chapter. Other travellers also copied a few lines of characters taken randomly from the three languages of inscriptions without having the least knowledge of what they represented. The first inscription to be copied in full was the inscription on the windows of the Palace of Darius, which was published by Chardin in 1735.² De Bruijn reproduced a better copy of the *window* inscriptions by placing the three lines one below the other in parallel, which showed that the inscriptions were to be read perpendicularly.³

THE QUERY ABOUT THE INSCRIPTIONS AT CHELMENAR: CHARDIN AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

The decipherment of the cuneiform script was a slow, complicated process. As early as March 1666, the question of the cuneiform characters was one of the issues in an inquiry by the members of the Royal Society of England, who composed a set of questions which occasionally was given to travellers who journeyed in the East.⁴ In a meeting held in No-

1 Budge, *Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, p. 11.

2 Chardin, *Voyage du Chevalier Chardin*, Amsterdam, 1735, vol. II, pp. 167-168.

3 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 73.

4 Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through travellers' eyes", *AchHist* VII, p. 23.

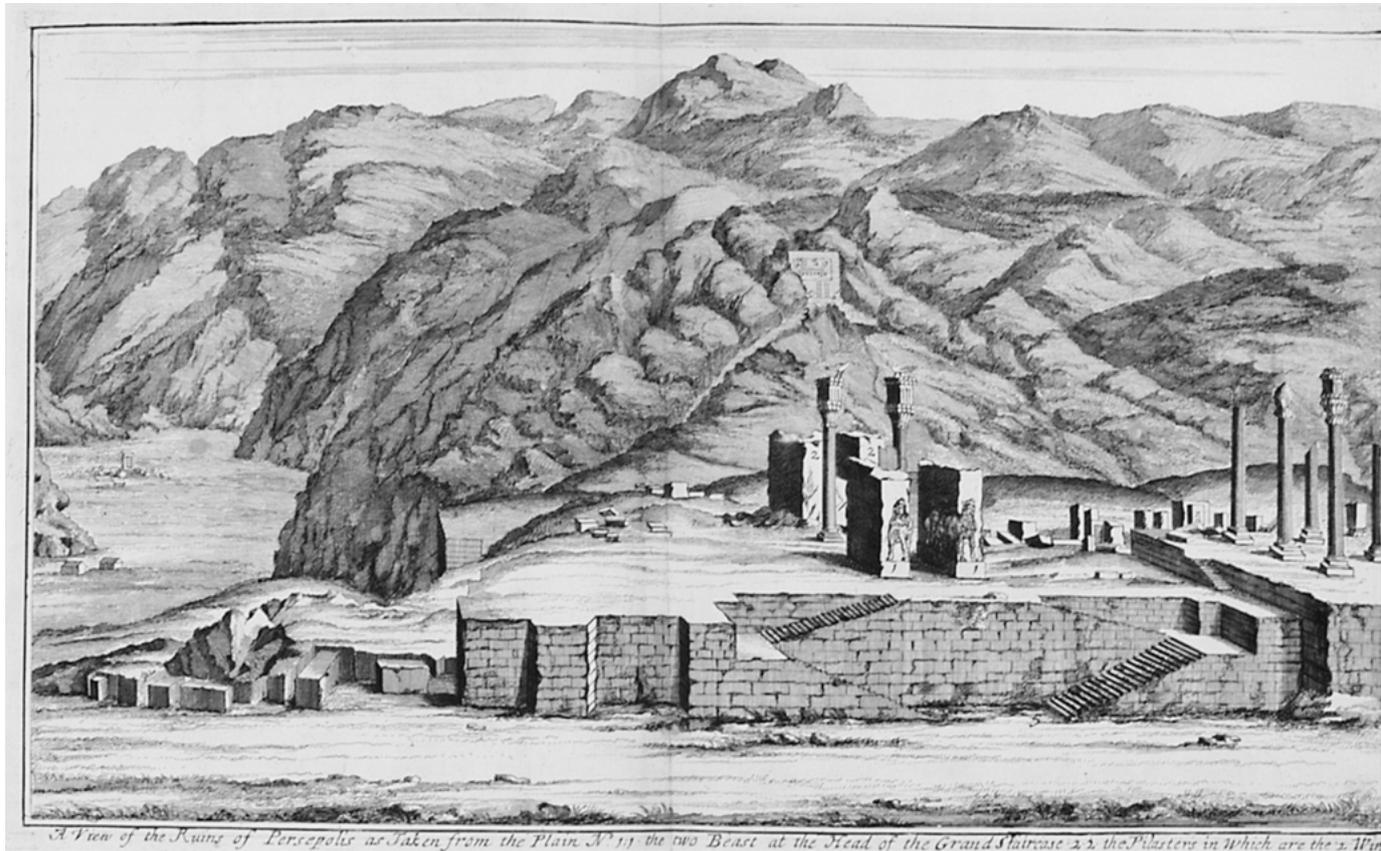


FIG. 6.1 A general view of Persepolis from the west, published in *Persepolis Illustrata*, 1739, with, at right, the standing column of Edifice 'E' in the southern plain (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

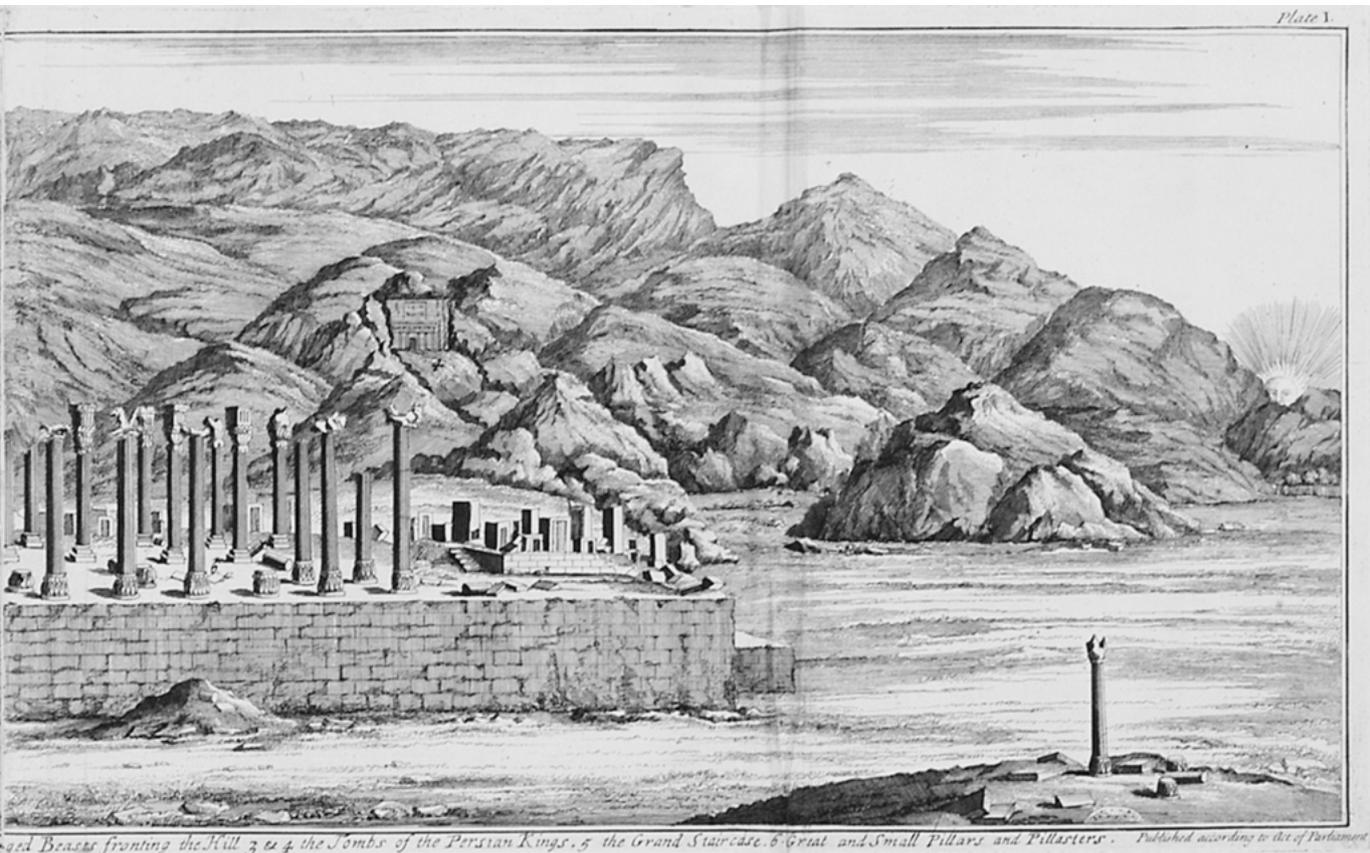
vember 1668 a letter from Benjamin Lannoy, the English Consul in Aleppo, was read to the attending members by Henry Oldenburg, the Secretary of the Society and the editor of the *Philosophical Transactions*. The letter contained the report of a visit to Persepolis by Stephen Flower, an agent of the East India Company in Persia. The part of the letter concerning his investigations at Persepolis reads:⁵

To your query about the pictures and bas relieves at Persepolis and Chilminar, he answers, that at present there are no draughts extant; he had seen one taken by a Padre Carmelian about four years since, who went for Rome, but very imperfect. In anno 1661, in company of agent Buckridge, who is now in England, Mr. Flower took a view of that piece of antiquity, which at present is so greatly defaced by time, that there is hardly anything discernible: however in compliance to the desire of the

Royal Society, which he esteems as a command, he hath found a person skilful in the faculty of limning and painting, a Polonese by nation, an ingenious person, who hath served the Kings of Persia there 30 years, whose license he hath procured, and contracted with him for 200 dollars, to accompany him to Chilminar [Chelmenar], and to take the draughts, which are most remarkable; and at his return to Spahaune to put them in colours.

The 22nd of November they arrived at Chilminar [Chelmenar], alias Persepolis, and went to the mountains called Norturestand [Naqsh-e Rostam], to the westward of Persepolis a good league, where they took the several draughts of the four tombs, where the ancient kings have been interred. They are all within a stone's cast of each other, of the same form and work, carved out of the main rock of greyish marble; and although some are more perfect and less defaced by time than others, yet it is hard to judge which is more ancient; their height [sic], and breadth, and length equal...

5 The letter is published by Thomas Birch in *The History of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 2, pp. 325-326.



After which they went to Persepolis,..., and there both without and within they began to take the several draughts, which the limner thought to have performed only at a distance, but Mr. Flower did not approve of that, being resolved to take the exactest draughts, that hitherto hath been taken, which the limner, perceiving Mr. Flower's resolution, was desirous to be executed of the contract. But Mr. Flower having taken so much pains, encouraged [sic] him to proceed, which will take him up, before he will be able to finish it, at least twelve months time, which he hopes, when finished will appear an excellent work, and acceptable to all that shall see it. He hath supplied the limner with money, a horse, and a servant, that, after that he hath taken the exact draughts, he may return to finish the work at Spahaune, where Mr. Flower expects an order for the sending of the said draughts, &c. whether by sea or land for its greater security,

and least damage, desiring to know, when the work is perfected, what order will be taken for his reimbursements.

As a result, drawings were made from the ruins and from the reliefs of Naqsh-e Rostam. With the desire of Flower to have detailed sketches of everything, including signs and characters, the work continued at the site. Flower asked for the necessary funds to get the drawings to Europe, but the Society, deciding that their small budget should be used for other purposes, refused to provide funds. Nonetheless, a few cuneiform characters were copied and published later by Thomas Birch in *The History of the Royal Society of England* in 1756-57.⁶ Flower's drawing is now in

6 There is another letter published after Flower's death, in which the anonymous author includes six drawings of the inscriptions copied by Flower ("A letter from Mr. F. A. Esqu; R.S. S. to the Publisher, with a paper of Mr. Flowers containing the exact draughts of several unknown characters, taken from the ruins at Persepolis", *Philosophical Transactions* (1683-1775), vol. 17, 1693, pp. 775-777).

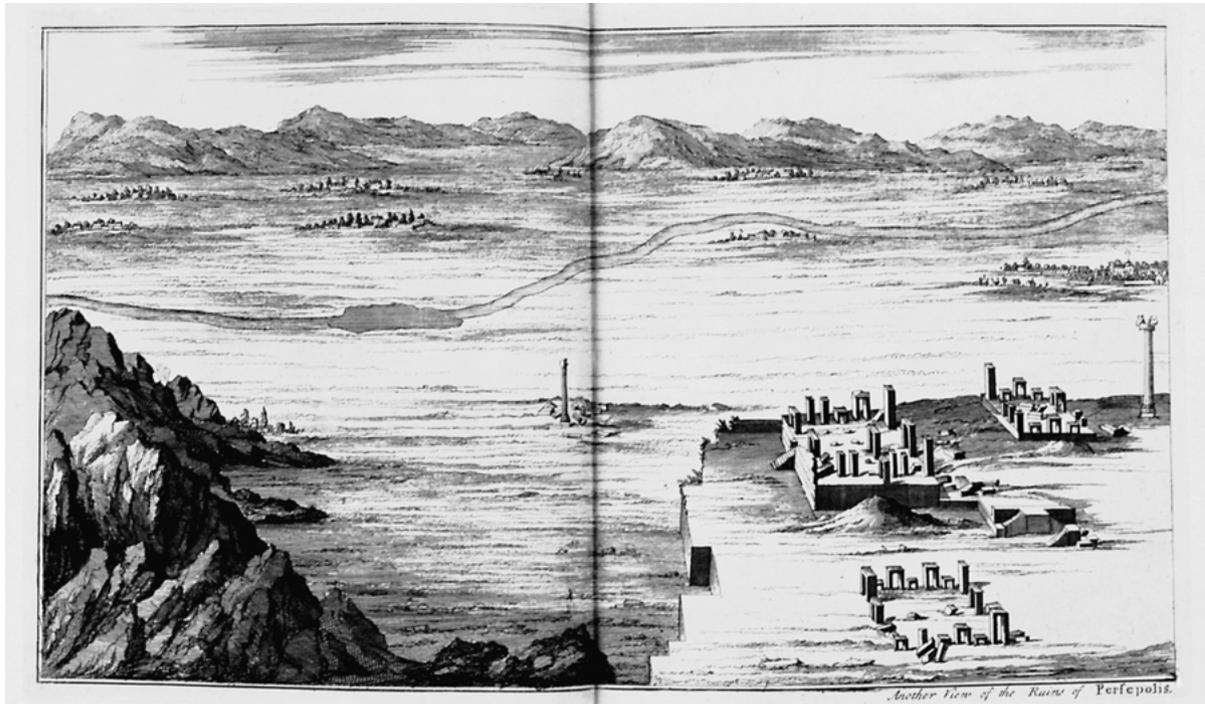


FIG. 6.2 View of the southern part of the Terrace and the city in the southern plain published in *Persepolis Illustrata*, 1739 (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

the British Library. A set of other drawings from the ruins were published years later in London in the anonymous book entitled *Persepolis Illustrata* (figs. 6.1-6.3).⁷ The cuneiform characters appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions* were, however, not the first exemplars of their kind that had been published in Europe. Herbert had already given three lines of characters taken randomly from the three systems of inscriptions engraved on structures at Persepolis. Then came the copies produced by Chardin from the inscription of Darius over the stone windows of his palace. But the inscription he had copied was not published until a later edition of his *Voyages* in 1735. The question of the cuneiform signs was possibly one of the main reasons why Chardin was eagerly invited to join the Royal Society after his arrival in London. On 30 August 1680, he received a visit from Sir John

Evelyn, Sir John Hoskins and Sir Christopher Wren, who have been delegated by the Royal Society to inform Chardin that the Society would feel honoured to receive him. John Evelyn, who recorded the meeting in his diary, describes Chardin as young, modest and extremely cultivated. The focal point of their discussion was the ruins of Persepolis, its magnificent sculptures and structures, and the enigmatic signs engraved on different parts of the ruins:⁸

I went to visit a French gentleman, one Monsieur Chardin, who having been thrice in the East Indies, Persia, and other remote countries, came hither in our return-ships from those parts, and it being reported that he was a very curious and knowing man, I was desired by the Royal Society to salute him in their name, and to invite him to honour them with his company.

Sir Joseph Hoskins and Sir Christopher Wren accompanied me. We found him at his lodgings in his

7 *Persepolis Illustrata or the ancient and royal palace of Persepolis in Persia, illustrated and described, in twenty one copper-plates*, London, 1739.

8 Evelyn, *Diary and Correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 145-146; also Van der Cruysse, *Chardin le Persan*, p. 277.

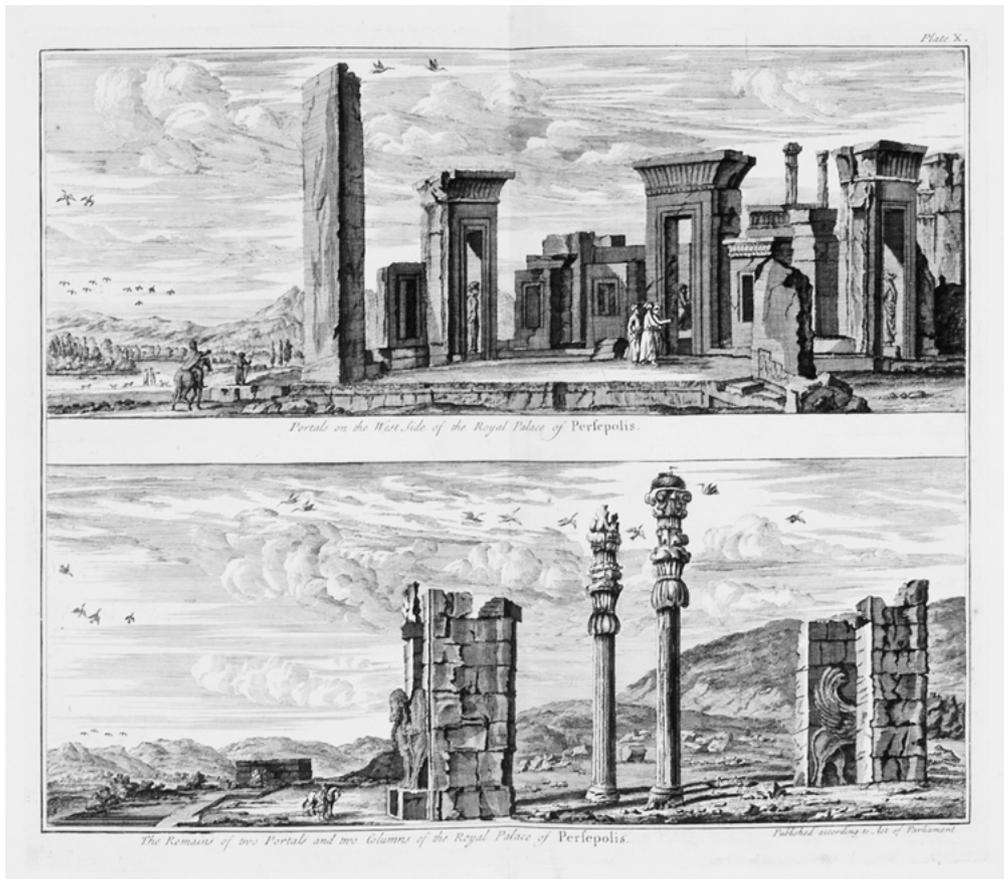


FIG. 6.3 The Palace of Darius (above) and the Gate of All Lands (below) from *Persepolis Illustrata*, 1739 (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

Eastern habit, a very handsome person, extremely affable, a modest, well-bred man, not inclined to talk wonders. He spake Latin, and understood Greek, Arabic, and Persian, from eleven years' travels in those parts, whither he went in search of jewels, and was become very rich.

He seemed about 36 years of age. After the usual civilities, we asked some account of the extraordinary things he must have seen in travelling over land to those places where few, if any, northern Europeans used to go, as the Black and Caspian Sea, Mingrelia, Bagdad, Nineveh, Persepolis, etc. He told us that the things most worthy of our sight would be, the draughts he had caused to be made of some noble ruins, etc.; for that, besides his own little talent that way, he had carried two good painters with him, to draw landscapes, measure and design the remains of the palace which Alexander burnt in his frolic at Persepolis, with divers temples, columns, *rilievos* and statues, yet extant, which he affirmed to be sculpture far exceeding anything he

had observed either at Rome, in Greece, or in any other part of the world where magnificence was in estimation. He said there was an inscription in letters not intelligible, though entire. He was sorry he could not gratify the curiosity of the Society at present, his things not being yet out of the ship; but would wait on them with them on his return from Paris, whither he was going the next day, but with intention to return suddenly, and stay longer here, the persecution in France not suffering Protestants, and he was one, to be quiet.

NIEBUHR'S COPIES IN EUROPE

It was not until Niebuhr's return in 1767 that relatively accurate and complete copies of the inscriptions of Persepolis were made available in Europe (fig. 6.4).⁹ He copied parts of the in-

⁹ Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, p. 39.



FIG. 6.4 Niebuhr’s copy of the cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis published in his *Reisebeschreibungen nach Arabien*.

scriptions of Darius and Xerxes (DPa, DPe, DPf, DPg, XPb and XPe).¹⁰ The few remarks Niebuhr has made upon the subject are of significant value and assisted later scholars. He observed that the inscriptions were written in three different “alphabets”, and that these always recurred together but he did not deduce the fact that the three inscriptions were repetitions of the same text in different languages. He noted that the “alphabet” in one of the tablets of the series was comparatively simple, and consisted of no more than forty-two different signs.¹¹ As Arthur John Booth precisely remarks, before Niebuhr the greatest confusion had been produced by the appearance of detached portions of inscriptions, selected randomly from all the three classes of writing. Niebuhr clearly detected each separate letter from among the number of confused signs in a line of inscription, and marked off each separate letter by a full stop or colon in the copies he made of the inscriptions themselves.¹²

While Niebuhr was travelling in the East, the French Orientalist, Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil du Perron (1731-1805) was learning Pahlavi and Persian in India under the Parsis. On his return to France in 1771, with self-sacrificing enthusiasm, he translated and published a copy of the *Zend-e Avesta*, thereby making known one of the ancient Iranian languages. The publication was of immeasurable value to the study of religion, philosophy, and history. This paved the way for another Frenchman, Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838) to study the Middle Persian language. In June 1792, with the dissolution of the Académie des Inscriptions under pressure from the Revolutionary decrees, de Sacy was forced to retire from his position of Commissaire général des monnaies in the Académie royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, which was to be dissolved by the Convention nationale in 1793. During the tumultuous years of the Reign of Terror (June 1793 –July 1794), he re-

10 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, vol. 2, pls. 24 and 31.

11 Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung*, p. 138.

12 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 81.

paired with his family to a country house where he divided his time between his research on the decipherment of Middle Persian texts and the cultivation of his garden.¹³ He soon understood their general sense. He realized they usually had a stereotyped style: "Name of the king, the great king, the king of kings, the king of Iran and Aniran, son of N., the great king, etc." Aside from its importance in its own field, this discovery had a decisive impact on the decipherment of the Old Persian language. Sacy presented the results in *Mémoires sur diverse antiquités de la Perse et sur les médailles des rois de la dynastie des Sassanides*, which was subsequently published in 1793 in Paris:¹⁴

Cette légende présente une particularité remarquable : après ces mots roi des rois d'Iran, elle ajoute & d'Aniran.

C'est précisément ce qu'on lit dans une des inscriptions de Nakchi-Roustam, & qui est rendu en grec par ces mots:

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΡΙΑΝΩΝ.

Ce mot *Aniran* est un composé formé du mot *Iran* & de la syllabe privative *an*, comme je l'ai prouvé dans mon Mémoire sur les inscriptions de Nakchi-Roustam. J'y ai fait voir que cette forme de composé négatif, et usitée dans les langues Zende & Pehlvi. J'ai observé aussi que dans les historiens Persans les noms d'Iran & de Touran qui, dans une acception plus étroite, signifient l'empire de Perse & le Turquestan, se prennent souvent d'une manière beaucoup plus vague pour toute la terre habitable, ou du moins pour toute l'Asie; & c'est d'après ces observations, que pour me conformer à la manière de parler des écrivains Orientaux, j'ai traduit les mots malcan malca Iran ve-Aniran, par ceux-ci, roi des rois de l'Iran & du Touran, substituant ainsi le mot *Touran*, comme plus connu, au mot *Aniran*.

Je crois nécessaire d'avertir qu'en traduisant ainsi, je ne regarde point le mot *Aniran* ou *Touran*, comme le nom d'un pays déterminé; je le prends dans une plus grande latitude qui renferme tout ce qui n'est pas compris sous le nom d'Iran, & à peu

près comme les Grecs & les Latins emploient le nom de *Barbares*, & les Arabes le mot *Adjem*.

A few years after the publication of Niebuhr's travel account, Olaus Gerhard Tychsen (1734-1813), a German Orientalist and Hebraist at the University of Rostock, made the first use of Niebuhr's copies of the Persepolitan inscriptions. He published a treatise in Latin, *De Cuneatis Inscriptionibus Persepolitianis Lucubratio*, in Rostock, in 1798. He had the merit of pointing out that a particular group of seven cuneiform letters were continually recurring, often followed by the same group with three or four other letters added to the termination. Tychsen's most important contribution was his discovery of the divider or diagonal wedge in the inscriptions of the first system. He also found out that the letters occurring between the diagonal wedges must be treated as one word. Tychsen's failure was his attempt to read the name of Arsacid kings, to whom he attributed the inscriptions.¹⁵

As a result of Tychsen's work, a German theologian and Orientalist, Friedrich Münter, began working on various copies, including those of Niebuhr. He discarded the erroneous assumption that the inscriptions belonged to the Arsacids, and demonstrated that the inscriptions of Persepolitan type were left by the Achaemenid kings¹⁶. He agreed with Niebuhr that the inscriptions represented three different kinds of writing, and he conjectured that the first was alphabetical, the second syllabic, and the third ideographic.¹⁷ He also admired de Sacy's reading of the Sasanian royal inscriptions, and deduced that the first language in the Persepolitan inscriptions was related to the Zend or the Pahlavi.¹⁸ Münter recognized that the diagonal wedge which occurred so frequently was used to separate words from each other much the same as the cypress tree that

13 Reinaud, *Notice historique et littéraire sur M. Le baron Silvestre de Sacy*, p. 19.

14 Sacy, *Mémoires sur diverse antiquités de la Perse*, p. 183.

15 For Tychsen's method and discoveries, see Weissbach, "Die Altpersischen Inschriften", *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, vol. 2, p. 64; Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 153; Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, p. 40; Pallis, *The Antiquity of Iraq*, pp. 97-99.

16 Münter, *Versuch über die keilförmigen Inschriften zu Persepolis*, p. 3.

17 Ibid., pp. 84-85.

18 Ibid., p. 111.

divided the groups of gift-bearers in the procession on the sculptured staircase of the Apadana.¹⁹ He thought one group of signs occurred between the diagonals, and he thought that it represented the title “King of kings”, and that the word that came before it must be the name of a king. He found the approximate value for seven signs (KH-SHA-A-YA-TH-I-YA) that means “king”. Münter’s significant contribution stopped here, but paved the way for another German who was finally able to offer a decipherment.

GROTEFEND AND THE DECIPHERMENT OF THE PERSEPOLITAN SCRIPTS

This next phase of the work started with the guess of a professor of Classical languages who knew no Oriental languages and who had never travelled in the East.²⁰ In 1802, Georg Friedrich Grotefend (1777-1853), a teacher of Greek and Latin in Hannover, began working on the copy of the inscriptions produced by Niebuhr. Grotefend (fig. 6.5) studied philology in Göttingen, and in 1797 he became a teacher at the municipal school of the city. Later he became the rector of the Frankfurt-on-the-Main Grammar School, and in 1821 was appointed the director of the School of Hannover in northern Germany. At the age of twenty-seven, the idea of decipherment first occurred to him.

De Sacy’s studies on the Pahlavi inscriptions led the German schoolmaster to expect that the content of the cuneiform inscriptions would be similar. He was also aware of the work of his predecessors, Tychsen and Mün-



FIG. 6.5 Georg Friedrich Grotefend (Photo © Historisches Museum, Hannover).

ter. Grotefend’s method is remarkably simple, based on the place of signs in the inscriptions and their comparison with Middle Persian royal inscriptions; his theory consists of a series of arguments supported by historical facts. Grotefend gave an account of his method in a paper in Latin presented to the Göttingen Academy in 1802, which was published only after ninety-one years in 1893.²¹ A copy of twelve cuneiform inscriptions was at that time available to Grotefend, of which he chose two in the “simplest system” which had been copied and published by Niebuhr.²² He explains the reasons for his choice:²³

19 Ibid., p. 113.

20 Sayce, *The Archaeology of Cuneiform Inscriptions*, p. 9.

21 Meyer, “G. Fr. Grotefends erste Nachricht von seiner Entzifferung der Keilschrift”, *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 14, pp. 574-616.

22 Borger gives a list of the inscriptions available in Europe at that time (“Grotefends erste ‘Praevia’”, *Die Welt des Alten Orients*, p. 158). For DPa, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 223; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 100-102, 226-227; Schmitt, *CII*, p. 53. For XPe, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 238; Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 102-103, 254; Schmitt, *CII*, pp. 79-80.

23 Grotefend, “On the cuneiform character, and particularly the inscriptions at Persepolis,” published as an appendix in A. H. L. Heeren, *Historical Research into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Principal Nations of Antiquity*, vol. 2, pp. 331-332.

Among the inscriptions of the first kind, there are two very accurately copied by Niebuhr... They are accompanied with translations evidently made from the two other kinds of writing which are of the same size, and, according to all appearance, of the same contents; and therefore as the first kind is in general the most simple of all the cuneiform writings, my predecessors have applied themselves to decipher it in preference to the rest. From the same point also I took my own departure,...I felt convinced that the word so often repeated, must signify "King." Having therefore arrived at the same principle as Tychsen and Münter, without perusing any word upon cuneiform writing, and without seeing any other copies than those of Le Bruyn and Niebuhr, I translated the two inscriptions according to the analogy of those in Pehlevi deciphered by M. de Sacy in the following manner:

N. N. REX. MAGNUS (?) REX. REGUM.
(REX. ____UM.)
FILIUS _____. (REGIS). STIRPS. ACHAEMENIS (?)
(——).

These inscriptions are known in the nomenclature of the Achaemenid inscriptions as 'Darius Persepolis a' (DPa) and 'Xerxes Persepolis e' (XPe). DPa is the trilingual inscription (in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian) on the jambs of the doorway connecting the portico with the main hall of Darius' palace or *tachara*. XPe is the trilingual inscription of Xerxes at his private palace, *hadish*, which occurs in fourteen exemplars on different parts of that building.²⁴ Following Niebuhr's suggestion, Grotefend satisfied himself that the inscriptions read from left to right, and that the system of writing he was working on was alphabetical. Based on analogy with the Sasanian inscriptions, he supposed that the first group of signs of each inscription might have represented the name of the kings X and Y, followed by a title and a brief genealogy. And he reached the following simplified reading the first words of the inscriptions:

X + kingZ
Y + kingX + king.

From this, Grotefend deduced that the groups of signs 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' represented proper names, and that 'X' and 'Y' were accompa-

nied by a group of signs that he rightly identified as 'king.' With his knowledge of ancient history and of the evidence provided by the travellers who had visited the site, he knew that the palaces had been built by the Achaemenid kings, and that the positions of the signs indicated that these proper names stood in genealogical relation to each other.

Classical authors give the list of the first five Achaemenid kings as Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. Cyrus and Cambyses were easily discarded because their names begin with the same letter; Artaxerxes, whose name is too long, was also disregarded. This left only one possibility for 'X' – it must represent Darius. It followed that 'Y' was Xerxes, his son, and finally 'Z' represents the name of Darius' father, Vishtaspa (or Hystaspes in its Greek form), who was not a king. Having learned the oldest forms of the names of the Achaemenid kings in question from Classical writers, and from Hebrew and Persian literature as well, he applied these forms to the groups of cuneiform signs. Then, he attempted to relate each group of signs to the proper names in question, which surprisingly contained the same number of letters. For 'X' he accordingly read DARHEUŠ (Darius), and for 'Y' he read Khšharša (Xerxes) according to its biblical form, and finally for 'Z' he read GOŠTASP (Viištasp). Grotefend gave an account of his decipherment method in a report written in Latin and presented to the Royal Society of Sciences of Göttingen in 1802. In 1805, he published the results of his research in an article, "Neue Beiträge zur Erläuterung der persepolitischen Keilschrift", as an appendix to a new edition of the work of his teacher, Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren. Grotefend's work became soon known in France, and in a letter addressed to Aubin Louis Millin de Grandmaison, the chief editor of *Magasin encyclopédique*, Sacy reviewed and gave a thorough reassessment of the German scholar's decipherment method, but did not fully agree with his reading of Darius and Xerxes.²⁵

24 Lecoq, *IPA*, p. 254.

25 Sacy, "Lettre à M. Millin sur les monuments persépolitains", *Magasin encyclopédique* 5, pp. 465-467.

Grotefend's lack of any comprehensive command of Iranian languages prevented him from advancing further in his decipherment, but the result of his investigations was the discovery of the correct values for eight letters in the Old Persian cuneiform alphabet.²⁶ According to James Baillie Fraser (1783-1856), who left a thorough account of the site in 1834, the unfortunate Claudius James Rich (1787-1821) visited Persepolis in 1821 with the intention of making a perfect copy of every inscription and of sending them to Grotefend in order to assist the German scholar in his research.²⁷ In fact, Rich with the help of his talented assistant, Carl Bellino, had already copied a large number of cuneiform inscriptions and sent his copies to Grotefend. Had he not died prematurely in 1820, Bellino would have realized his plans to copy the Bisutun inscriptions and those on the rock-cut tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam. Eugène Burnouf, the eminent French scholar of Middle Persian published his *Commentaire sur le Yaçna* in 1834, and then his own translation of the cuneiform inscriptions near Hamadan and at Van in *Mémoire sur deux inscriptions cuneiformes* in 1836. These publications afforded the most valuable assistance to a young English scholar, Henry Rawlinson (1810-1895).²⁸ While on a military mission to Kermanshah in 1835, Rawlinson had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the rock-cut inscriptions of Darius the Great at Bisutun, near Kermanshah. He painstakingly copied hundreds of signs belonging to the Old Persian version of the inscription, and subsequently worked on their decipherment over a period of more than a decade. His final reading of the Old Persian text, *Persian cuneiform inscription at Behistun decyphered and translated*, was published in London in 1846. The rest of the story does not concern us here, but it should be recognized that Rawlinson's work marked a turning point in the archaeol-

Worttrenner. TYCHSEN 1798.	
1.	𐎠 a GROTEFEND 1802
2.	𐎡 i SAINT-MARTIN 1832
3.	𐎢 u GROTEFEND 1802
4.	𐎣 ka BURNOUF, LASSEN 1836
5.	𐎤 ku RAWLINSON 1846 (GROTEFEND 1815: k)
6.	𐎥 ga LASSEN 1836
7.	𐎦 gu RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: g')
8.	𐎧 x GROTEFEND 1802
9.	𐎨 t JACQUET 1836/7
10.	𐎩 ja HOLTZMANN 1845 (JACQUET 1836/7: z)
11.	𐎪 ji RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: j)
12.	𐎫 f GROTEFEND 1802
13.	𐎬 tu RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: t')
14.	𐎭 da RAWLINSON 1846 (GROTEFEND 1802: d)
15.	𐎮 di RAWLINSON 1846 (HOLTZMANN 1845: d')
16.	𐎯 du RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: d')
17.	𐎰 ð JACQUET 1836/7
18.	𐎱 p GROTEFEND 1802
19.	𐎲 b BURNOUF 1836
20.	𐎳 f GROTEFEND 1802
21.	𐎴 n RASK 1826
22.	𐎵 nu RAWLINSON 1846
23.	𐎶 ma RAWLINSON 1846 (RASK 1826: m)
24.	𐎷 mi RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: m')
25.	𐎸 mu RAWLINSON 1846
26.	𐎹 ya BEER, JACQUET 1837/38
27.	𐎺 va RAWLINSON 1846 (LASSEN 1836: w)
28.	𐎻 vi RAWLINSON 1846 (ST.-MARTIN 1822: v)
29.	𐎼 r GROTEFEND 1802
30.	𐎽 ru JACQUET 1837/8 (GROTEFEND 1815: sr)
31.	𐎾 la OPPERT 1851
32.	𐎿 s GROTEFEND 1802
33.	𐏀 z BURNOUF 1836
34.	𐏁 š GROTEFEND 1802
35.	𐏂 ð RAWLINSON 1846
36.	𐏃 h BEER, JACQUET 1837/8
IDEOGRAMME.	
37.	𐏄 »König« GROTEFEND 1802
38.	𐏅 »Land« LASSEN 1845
39.	𐏆 »Erde« LASSEN 1845
40.	𐏇 »Ahuramazda« EVETTS 1890 (OPPERT 1874: 𐏈).

FIG. 6.6 The discovery of the phonetic values of the Old Persian cuneiform script as summarized by Weissbach in *Altpersische Inschriften*.

ogy of Western Asia, and paved the way for the decipherment of other cuneiform scripts (fig. 6.6). In this way, the exploration of the ancient ruins at Persepolis proved to be one important key to the development of historical and archaeological studies in the first half of the nineteenth century.

26 A detailed history of the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions is given in Percy Handcock's *A Handbook of Mesopotamian Archaeology*, pp. 85-94. For a more recent publication, see Finkel, "The decipherment of Achaemenid cuneiform", *The Forgotten Empire*, pp. 25-29.

27 Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. 2, p. 223; Fraser, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time*, p. 159.

28 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 206; Budge, *The Rise and Progress of Assyriology*, pp. 47-52.

VII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THE EMERGENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The advent of the Qajars in 1779 re-established political stability in Iran. Nothing is reported from the situation of the ruins in the late years of the eighteenth century, which was marked by Aqa-Muhammad Khan's brutal wars and expansionism. His nephew, Fath-Ali Shah, second ruler of the Qajar dynasty, transformed a tribal rule into a centralized and stable monarchy. Both Aqa-Muhammad-Khan and Fath-Ali Shah had a strong sense of Iranian identity. There is no inscription of graffiti left by the early Qajars at Persepolis but Fath-Ali Shah who was first the gover of Fars must have seen the glorious ruins at Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, the source of inspiration for his own rock-reliefs at Shiraz and Rey.¹

With the creation of national museums in Europe from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards and the resulting increased demand for art objects, travellers attempted to do further investigation by the procedure of excavation for portable artefacts and removable architectural elements. Unfortunately, very few of them left records describing their digging operations. There is no mention of excavation prior to the early years of the nineteenth century when the Europeans' travels to Persia were intensified because of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and the Russo-Persian conflicts between 1804 and 1828. A series of British and French diplomatic missions were sent to Persia with the aim of seeking alliance for an ultimate intervention of Persia in case of any threat to India. There is a remarkable increase in the number of names after 1800, when as many as eighty-nine British names were recorded: 1804 (6 names), 1809/10 (39 names), 1821 (10 names), and 1826 (15 names). A

large number of names engraved on the Gate of All Lands or the Palace of Darius belong to British travellers.² That was the time when the enterprise of individual travel was about to be superseded by commissioners and diplomats sent by foreign governments to collect information on a larger scale and in an official capacity.

THE HUNT FOR KNOWLEDGE AND ANTIQUITIES: BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN QUEST OF SCULPTURES

The British accounts of the ruins at Persepolis, namely those left by William Ouseley, James Morier, and Robert Ker Porter, make use of both the preceding travellers' writings and their own meticulous observation and research. Ouseley draws largely on historians and geographers of Islamic Iran, but also uses Greek and Latin sources. His description is without doubt the most comprehensive and reliable account of Persepolis published in the first half of the nineteenth century. Morier's description is succinct but it includes the report of his exploration at Persepolis. Ker Porter's romantic account is important because of its accurate illustrations of the ruins at Persepolis.

James Morier (1780-1849), a British diplomat and traveller of Swiss origin, visited Persepolis twice and decided to carry out excavations there. On his first visit in 1809 Morier came to Persia with Sir Harford Jones, the first British envoy to the court of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. In 1811, he returned to Persia as Secre-

1 For Fath-Ali Shah's political culture and public image in general, see Amanat, "Fath-Ali Shah Qajar", *Enclr*, online edition. For Fath-Ali Shah's rock-reliefs, see Luft, "The Qajar rock reliefs", *IrSt* 34/1, pp. 31-49.

2 Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, p. 10; "Pottering around Persepolis: observations on early European visitors", *Persian Responses*, p. 345.

tary to the Embassy of Sir Gore Ouseley, whose brother, William Ouseley (1769–1842) was known to be a great Orientalist.³

William Ouseley, accompanying his brother's diplomatic mission, explored monuments in Fars. He examined the ruins at Takht-e Jamshid and copied several inscriptions including the Middle Persian inscriptions on the doorjambs of the Palace of Darius.⁴ In terms of visual documentation of the ruins, Ouseley's illustrations are no match for the far better drawings of his predecessors. His interest in archaeological artefacts is reflected in the drawings and descriptions of a number of arrowheads in metal, which he either acquired from peasants in the whereabouts of Persepolis or bought from shops in Shiraz.⁵ Ouseley's meticulous study of the ruins shows his keen knowledge of all the existent sources relevant to the history of ancient Persia which were available in his time. In the study of Persepolis, covering some two hundred pages of his book, he examines all visible structures, and analyses his predecessors' writings and opinions. Curiously enough, he then takes note of fifteen "negative observations" of what he did not perceive at Persepolis, such as traces of the Parthian period, figures of women, human figures in a state of nudity, etc.... He also writes that he did not see any trace of gilding, and rejects what Chardin and Herbert had observed before as gilding or inlays.⁶ Ouseley was the first to have carried out "chemical experiments" on several fragments of Persepolis to determine the nature of the stone.⁷ Another significance of his publication is that he gives

all the references in Arabic or Persian sources relevant to the ruins of Istakhr often identified with Persepolis; this is a study of prime importance which has not been surpassed by later publications.⁸ It is unfortunate to remark that such an admirable scholarly mind did not hesitate to detach or remove several sections of the sculptures to send to England.

There are other members of Ouseley's mission who were interested in exploring Persepolis. William Price, Assistant-secretary to Gore Ouseley, wrote *A Dissertation upon the Antiquities of Persepolis*, which was published in London in 1825. After Gore Ouseley's departure from Tehran, Morier temporarily took charge of the British Mission for a year.⁹ Aside from his well-known picaresque novel, *The Adventures of Haji Baba of Isfahan*, Morier published the accounts of his travels in *A Journey to Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor*, in 1812, and *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor*, in 1818. He is also known to be the first to draw attention to the fact that the so-called Tomb of the Mother of Solomon corresponds to the monument described by the classical authors such as Arrian and Strabo as the Tomb of Cyrus the Great.¹⁰

Having read the accounts left by Chardin (1711) and De Bruijn (1737), he had become acquainted with the ruins before arriving in their midst. He gives a comprehensive description of the structures on the platform at Persepolis, illustrated with his own drawings and paintings. Morier excavated in the ruins on the occasion of his second visit to the site. He writes on his explorations as follows:¹¹

3 The discovery of a hoard of precious stones and jewelry in the tomb of the Ilkhan Arghun near Soltaniyeh in 1811 became known in Fars. In consequence, Hossein-Ali Mirza Farmanfarma gave orders to break the lids of stone coffins in the Achaemenid tombs at Persepolis with the aim of finding similar treasures. They did not find anything except fine dust of the bodies of "Jamshid, Kavus, and Qobad" (Fasai, *Fārsnāme-y-e Nāseri*, vol. 1, p. 708.

4 Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East*, vol. 2, pl. XLII.

5 Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 185, 486, pl. XXXIX.

6 Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 281.

7 Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 242.

8 Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 339-420.

9 For more details on his diplomatic role and explorations in Persia, see Denis Wright's *The English amongst the Persians*, pp. 6-7, 15, 17, 151-52.

10 Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pp. 2-3.

11 Morier *A second journey through Persia*, pp. 75-76.

I went early in the morning to the ruins, which were situated about a mile from my habitation, attended by the stone-cutters. Considering the quantity of sculptured remains that had fallen from their original positions, and which were spread about the ruins in great profusion, I did not hesitate to appropriate such parts of them as seemed the most fitting to be sent to England... The most interesting part of the ruins, in point of sculptural detail, is certainly the front of the staircase, which leads to the great hall of columns; and here I found many fallen pieces, corresponding to those still erect. I caused one large stone to be turned, upon which was sculptured the busts of two large figures. It was impossible to carry away the whole block, as I had no other mode of conveyance than the backs of mules and asses, consequently the two figures were obliged to be separated; but unfortunately a vein running across the upper part of the stone, the head-dress of one of the figures was broken off in the operation. The Persians do not know the use of the saw in stone-cutting, therefore my dissections were performed in a very rude manner... Both Le Bruyne and Chardin have only given one line of figures on the left staircase; but as it was evident that in order to complete the symmetry there must have been the same number on the left as there are on the right, I hired some labourers from the surrounding villages, and made them dig. To my great delight, a second row of figures, highly preserved, were discovered, the details of whose faces, hair, dresses, arms, and general character, seemed but the work of yesterday.

In an article on the history of archaeological activities in Iran during the Qajar period, Chahryar Adle, historian and archaeologist, criticizes Morier's work at Persepolis:¹²

He [Morier] did not ask himself whether or not, under the ethical or legal standards prevailing at the time in Persia, or even in England, the unauthorized removal of a work of art would deserve reprehension. Nor did he realize that he had at least made an error of management by entrusting the task to Persians, whom he considered devoid of any skill or quality and corrupt.

Morier continued his work for two days, after which it was interrupted by the local governor. Then he made inquiries to locate other

ruins in the region as well as coins and gems. He was not successful in this pursuit either. During his first visit to Persepolis, he repeated Chardin's painstaking experiment of exploring the "subterranean passages that traverse the ground on which Persepolis is built":¹³

A staircase cut into an immense mass of rock (and from its small dimensions, probably the *escalier dérobé* of the palace) leads into the lesser enclosed plain below...

In the rear of the whole of these remains, are the beds of aqueducts which are cut into the solid rock. They met us in every part of the building; and are probably therefore as extensive in their course, as they are magnificent in construction. The great aqueduct is to be discovered among a confused heap of stones in the rear of the front row of building, and almost adjacent to a ruined staircase.

We descended into its bed, which in some cases is cut 10 feet into the rock. This bed leads east and west: to the east its descent is rapid about 25 paces; it then narrows, so that we could only crawl through it; and again it enlarges, so that a man of common height may stand upright in it. It terminates by an abrupt rock.

During his second visit, he recognized these passages as sewage canals, but once again he complained of not being as lucky as Chardin (who in his first attempt had been able to discover them). Morier describes this venture as follows:¹⁴

I had several people with me with candles and lanterns, but we found ourselves stopped short by a very narrow passage, after having walked some forty paces upright.

We then crept through this on our hands and knees, and again came to a higher part. Again we proceeded, and then were obliged to crawl on our bellies, until there was only room to put one's head through, when we thought it time to return. This is much like Chardin's account of his first adventure in the dark passages, that I am inclined to think we did penance on our bellies somewhere on the very same spot. Of this I am certain, that it is not the famous passage in which he walked at his ease for near an hour, and then came out for fear of losing his way.

12 Adle, "Khorheh, the dawn of Iranian scientific archaeological excavation", *TQ* 3-4, p. 230 (the Persian text).

13 Morier, *A Journey through Persia*, p. 131.

14 Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia*, pp. 77-78. The subterranean drainage system was later explored in the course of excavations carried out by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in the 1930s (Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 210).

He also explored the structure known as the Unfinished Tomb, mistaking the large cuttings of the rock, which had been left incomplete, for “intricate avenues, as to form a labyrinth”. In July of the same year, Morier returned to Persepolis for further digging, now in the company of Robert Gordon (1791-1847), younger brother of George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen and another member of Gore Ouseley’s mission. This time the local governor was unable to obstruct his activities. With the help of some artillerymen, Morier cleared away the “very narrow passage into the first tomb described by Chardin” (probably the tomb attributed now to Artaxerxes II) and briefly explored the interior tomb chamber that Chardin had mentioned. Gordon meanwhile hired some villagers to dig for him “near the front of the staircase” [of the Apadana] that Morier had previously uncovered. In a letter written in Isfahan on the 21st August 1811 and now preserved in the British Library, Gordon proudly recounts his “Elgician” enterprise to Lord Aberdeen:¹⁵

In our way from Shiraz we made Persepolis our second day’s stage where we stayed for three days. I am happy to say that in this short time I have been able to dig up some of the best specimens that have yet appeared of Persepolitan workmanship, of which you may form a judgment from the inclosed representations, traced from a drawing of Morier’s, and have dispatched them to Bombay; they will proceed from there together with the last cargo sent from Shiraz.

Sir Gore Ouseley dispatched Morier from Shiraz on public duty (during my Journey to Shuster) to Persepolis, as well to give an account of the ruins, as to procure to Sir Gore the best possible fragments, Morier remained there a fortnight and Sir Gore has dispatched to England all that was procured for him in that time, which excepting a few pieces belonging to Morier is all that has gone to England of Persepolitan antiquity save what will be in your possession. Morier tells me (for they were

sent before my return) that Sir Gore’s specimens are not superior to those of mine sent in the Lion, but that there was a beautiful specimen of the character. This he fortunately dug up, which is the only method of procuring fragments that admit of being moved such is the gigantic nature of the building; every thing besides above ground is in a state of mutilation. In my excavations I have not had the fortune to meet with any of the Persepolitan character, and the specimens I have procured are consequently of an inferior nature. A massive pilaster with a gigantic figure upon it and an inscription over his head, had suffered from its exposure to the sun, or as the zealots maintain the torch of Thais; this induced my attempt to carry off the inscription, which with the assistance of hammers we absolutely peeled off as if had been a slate. It was much broken in the operation, but such as it is I send it. I am carrying with me some small fragments which have the character finer and better executed than what I have sent to you...

Gordon found sculptural fragments, including a section from the Apadana showing a chariot drawn by two horses, which he gave to Ouseley who then sent them to England.¹⁶ According to Gordon’s own account, his unbridled stealing of sculptures led Ouseley and his companions to criticize him: not for unethical behaviour toward the ancient Persian heritage, but for glutting the antiquities market back in England. Gordon promised not to do this, and ultimately sought Lord Aberdeen’s partnership in antiquities dealing.¹⁷ Later, Ouseley decorated the staircase in his London house with some of the reliefs from Persepolis. Eventually they were presented to the British Museum, with the exception of two pieces, and most recently published in the catalogue of the “Forgotten Empire” exhibition in 2005.¹⁸ The practice was criticized by both Ker Porter and Rich. With reference to this, Rich wrote: “Many parts have been defaced by the passion for possessing curiosities. This rage has induced some even to chip off bits of inscrip-

15 The letter has been fully published by John Curtis, “A chariot scene from Persepolis”, *Iran* 36, pp. 48-49.

16 Morier, *A second Journey through Persia*, pp. 114-115.

17 Gordon’s letter to his brother, Lord Aberdeen, dated 21st August 1811 published in Curtis, “A chariot scene from Persepolis”, *Iran* 36, p. 49. Curtis also writes on the fate of these two fragments and how one of them ended up in the Miho Museum in Japan (Curtis, “A chariot scene from Persepolis”, *Iran* 36, p. 5). Adle provides further details on the sale of these fragments at a Sotheby’s auction in London (Adle, “Khorheh: the dawn of Iranian scientific archaeological excavation”, *TQ* 3-4, p. 238, note 10).

18 Curtis and Razmjou, “The palace”, *Forgotten Empire*, pp. 68-75.

tions! One has endeavoured to chisel off a very fine head, which was well preserved, and, not succeeding, he has apparently in wrath, thrown his mallet against the head and smashed it".¹⁹

KER PORTER, THE ROMANTIC TRAVELLER

The ruins of Takht-e Jamshid were to receive more ethical visitors in the first half of the nineteenth century beginning with Sir Robert Ker Porter (1777-1842), who is better known as a painter, but who was also a great explorer and traveller (fig. 7.1). His writings are free of the arrogance and prejudiced notions found in other travel accounts of the nineteenth century. Instead, Ker Porter tried to explore countries in the context of liberal speculation and generous curiosity, emphasizing the civilized mind over brutal force. In this way, he was closer to the approach of the enlightened tradition of the seventeenth century travellers.²⁰ He had the trained eye of a skilled draughtsman and painter. This visual ability gave his reports a significant level of accuracy. He had a good knowledge of the ancient history of Iran associated with mythological and legendary aspects.²¹ Early in life he was invited as a painter to the court of Russia. Being married to a Russian princess, who was a cousin of Alexis Nikolaevich Olinin, he entered the circles of St. Petersburg nobility. Olinin was one of the most distinguished Orientalists of his time, and held a number of prominent positions in the government. He had studied Old Iranian languages, history and art history. He was particularly interested in acquiring better drawings of the ruins of Persepolis.

Such an endeavour required another journey to Persia, and he found no one better than Ker Porter, who was a trained artist in the fields of military and historical landscape painting and Biblical subjects. Olinin's letter to Ker Porter outlined the scholarly nature of the expedition and its main goal; the letter written originally in French was partly translated into English and published in the preface of Ker Porter's *Travels*. Olinin gave specific instructions stressing that such drawings should be made with accuracy and to use hatches to indicate lost fragments or parts.²²

When comparing the engravings in the *Travels* of Chardin, Le Brun, and Niebuhr, which represent the same subject, we find them so utterly contradictory to each other, as not to bear the smallest pretensions to fidelity; being rather vague memorandums, than anything of veritable outline...

In this great perplexity to a lover of antiquity, I place my confidence in your plain dealing; that you will decide the controversy, by taking the trouble to make your drawings on the spot, and with scrupulous exactness copying the object before you line by line. Indeed, I conjure you, in the name of the Holy Antiquity, to mark down nothing but what you actually see; nothing suppose; nothing repair. I only beg you to represent the original ancient remains "tali quali, in statu quo"...

In conclusion, I repeat, draw only what you see!

Correct nothing; and preserve, in your copies, the true character of the originals. Do not give to Persian figures a French tournure, like Chardin; nor a Dutch, like Van Bruyn, (Le Brun;) nor a German, or rather Danish, like Niebuhr; nor an English grace, like some of your countrymen; in your portraits of the fragments at Nakshi-Roustam.

Ker Porter set out for Persia in the summer of 1817, and reached Tehran via Tabriz. He then travelled to the south, and apparently spent ten days at Persepolis in June 1818, staying with a group of nomads whom he admired for their hospitality and exotic food. The report

19 Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. 2, p. 222.

20 Paul Luft, "Sir Robert Ker Porter: wanderer between three worlds", paper presented in the conference: *The Study of Persian Culture in the West: Sixteenth to Early Twentieth Century*, organized by Iran Heritage Foundation and the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, 24-27 June, 2004, unpublished.

21 Barnett, "Sir Robert Ker Porter: Regency artist and traveller", *Iran* 10, p. 21.

22 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. vi-viii. The publication of the original text of Olinin's letter to Ker Porter, bespeaks the Russian Orientalist's depth of knowledge and interest in having reliable, scholarly documents of ancient Iranian monuments (Vasilieva, "About the history of Sir Robert Ker Porter's album with his sketches of Achaemenid and Sasanian monuments", *AMI* 27, pp. 343-345).



FIG. 7.1 Sir Robert Ker Porter by William Oakley Burgess (Photo © National Portrait Gallery, London).

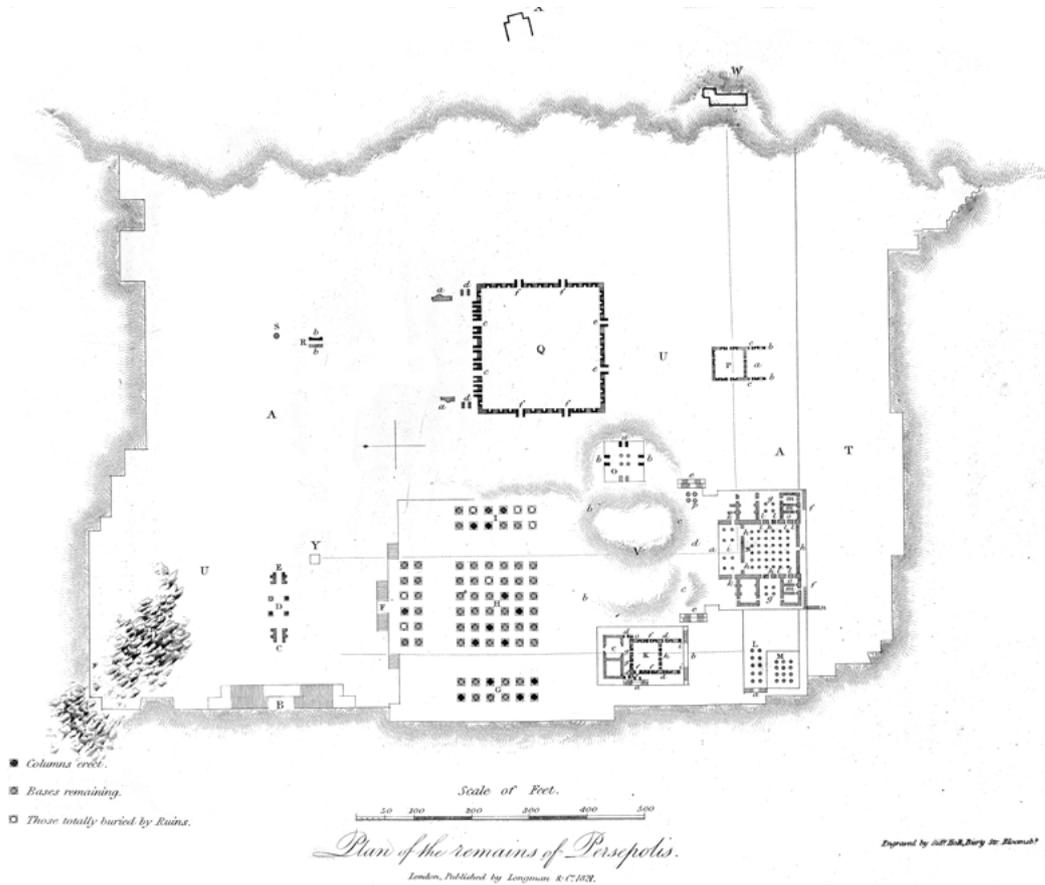


FIG. 7.2 Ker Porter's plan of the Terrace of Persepolis published in his *Travels*.

of his visit of the ruins at Takht-e Jamshid covers more than a hundred pages of his *Travels*, and gives a comprehensive account of the ruins, enriched with his own drawings.²³ His merit lies in the careful investigations he made upon the ground itself, in the painstaking and accurate measurements he took of each monument, and the clear account he gives of the various structures. Ker Porter's book, published in 1821, continued for thirty years to be the main authority on the ruins. It was used by Heeren in Germany in the fourth edition of his *Researches* which appeared in 1824; Texier amply used that publication, and even complained that there was no comparably reliable book in French on the subject. Ker Porter's account of the ruins was only superseded

by the publication of the most elaborate work of Flandin and Coste in 1851.²⁴

Ker Porter is probably the first European traveller who recorded the name of Takht-e Jamshid as it was called by local people. For Ker Porter Chelmenar was the main columned hall (the Apadana) as he wrote: "... the magnificent terrace that supports the multitude of columns, from which it takes its name... On drawing near the Chehel-minar, or Palace of Forty Pillars, which is the name given to this splendid division of ruins, the eye is riveted by the grandeur and beautiful decorations of the flights of steps which lead up to them" (fig. 7.2).²⁵ Being unaware of the content of the cuneiform inscriptions, Ker Porter attributed the ruins of Persepolis to Cyrus the Great.

23 Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Armenia, Persia, Ancient Babylon*, vol. 1, pp. 581-684.

24 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 94.

25 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 594.

He believed that the site was a place for royal ceremonies.²⁶ Ker Porter was the first to compare the description of the Palace of Solomon given in the Bible with some specific structures in the ruins, a comparison that precedes Shah-bazi's meticulous work on the subject by some two hundred years (see chapter 2):

It is curious to turn again to the Book of Kings, to still farther compare this particular spot on the "throne of Jemsheed", with what is said in Holy Writ of the situation and fabric of the throne of Solomon. "And it was covered with cedar above, upon the beams that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row; and light was against light in three ranks. And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits, and the porch was before them; and the other pillars, and the thick beams were before them. Then he made a porch for the throne, where he might judge; and it was covered with cedar from one side to the other of the floor. — Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold; and there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting-place, and two lions standing by the stays; and twelve lions stood there, on the one side and on the other, on the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom."

(1 Kings, c. vii. part of ver. 3. 4. 6,1.; 2 Chron. c. ix. ver. 17, 18, 19.).

He returns to biblical texts later by comparing the ivory throne and the golden footstool with the reliefs on the doorjambes of the Hall of a Hundred Columns:²⁷

At one hundred and ninety feet to the north, stands a structure next in extent as a single building, to that of the Chehelminar [the Apadana]. It is a perfect square, of two hundred and ten feet along each face...The sides of the principal doors are richly adorned with sculpture; and in the most elevated compartment of the whole, we find the kingly personage mentioned before, seated on his chair of state, with both feet resting on a footstool. Over his head, are the bas-relief remains of a canopy supported by slender pillars, the whole profusely decorated with fret-work, fringes, and borders of lions and bulls... The seat of the royal personage answers exactly to the description given by Brisson in one of

the passages he has selected as illustrative of Persian antiquities and customs, and which states, that the throne of the king of Persia was a chair gorgeously inlaid with gold, covered with a splendid carpet or cushion, and so high from the ground, that a stool was always placed at its feet. This description is not unlike that of the throne of Solomon, in the second book of Chronicles: — "Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold; and there was a footstool of gold, and stays on each side of the sitting-place".

With his romantic pen, Ker Porter expresses his regret about the destruction of the site, especially on the occasion of the burning of the palaces by the hands of Macedonian soldiers:²⁸

On ascending the platform on which the palace of Chehelminar once stood, nothing can be more striking than the view of its ruins; so vast, and magnificent, so fallen, mutilated and silent...every object, when I saw it, was as beautiful as desolate; amidst the pleasing memories of the past, awakening poignant regret, that such noble works of human ingenuity should be left to the desert alone; that the pile of indefatigable labour should be destined, from the vicissitudes of revolution, and the caprice, ignorance, or fanaticism of succeeding times, to be left in total neglect; or, when noticed, doomed to the predatory mallet, and every other attack of unreflecting destruction.

Ker Porter also reports on what could be seen outside the Terrace, and it is interesting to compare his description with that of Chardin who had seen the structure some one hundred-fifty years before:²⁹

The second object is to be the south-west of the platform, and consists of a heap of beautiful fragments, apparently the ruins of a temple, or some structure of architectural consequence; which the views of Chardin and Le Brun have distinguished by a noble and solitary column standing up from amidst its fallen companions, like a hero over his mighty dead. But it is now laid beside them, and the long grass alone, "waves its green banner" above the prostrate pillars of greatness. The last stroke which levelled this beautiful relic, was struck about fifteen years ago by a party of the natives, for the sake of iron which united the stones together. My

26 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 639.

27 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 662-663.

28 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 631-632.

29 Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 680.

informant was the peasant who daily attended me in my researches, and who confessed to have been one in the act of depredation.

Four years after Ker Porter's visit to Persepolis, Claudius James Rich who had been appointed a Resident of the East India Company in Baghdad, visited the site. His friendship with Ker Porter and his passion for travel and exploration took him finally to Shiraz in the summer of 1821. Rich's diary is full of excitement about the ruins and describes how, as a child, he had been inspired by Jean Chardin's account of Persepolis. Rich's passion for exploring the site in full was never realized because of his untimely death in Shiraz in 1821 at the age of thirty-four.³⁰

OTHER TRAVELLERS' EXPLORATIONS OF PERSEPOLIS IN EARLY QAJAR IRAN

The British never lost their urge to hunt for antiquities, and only three years after Ker Porter's visit to the site, another group of British travellers came to visit the ruins in 1826. The excavation and removal of sculptured fragments was resumed this time by Colonel John Macdonald Kinneir (1782-1830). Macdonald served in the Madras infantry, and later was attached to Sir John Malcolm's mission to Persia in 1808-09, during which he made numerous journeys in Persia, which provided the basis for his book *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire*, published in 1813.³¹ In

his Memoir, he expresses his disdain of ancient Persian sculptures:³²

In sculpture and painting, the Persians have at no time attained any degree of perfection. Even the figures at Persepolis, and other parts of the country, are deficient in taste and proportion; with the exception of some of those in the plain of Kermanshah, which I believe to have been executed by Grecian or Roman artists.

Despite this he endeavoured to obtain a sculpture from Persepolis as we are informed by James Alexander, a junior officer in Macdonald's company:³³

Colonel Macdonald employed people in clearing away the earth from a staircase, made the interesting discovery of a chimerical figure representing a lion or dragon winged, with a human head, resting one of its paws on a lotus-flower, supported by a stem like that of the date-tree. No similar figure had ever previously been discovered at Persepolis. Four figures mounting steps were also brought to light: they seem to be employed in carrying viands requisite for a feast. The first bears two cups, the second a covered goblet, the third a lamb, and the fourth a skin either of water or wine.

The relief of a winged sphinx, probably from the façade of Palace 'G', was removed from the site two years after its excavation by Dr. John McNeill who took it for the purpose of putting it up later in his house in Scotland which was "fitted up entirely with Persian materials". It was later purchased by the British Museum in 1937.³⁴

Alexander also mentions another little-known excavator of the site, Ephraim Gerrish Stannus (1784-1850) another officer of the

30 Curtis, "The British and archaeology in nineteenth-century Persia", *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, pp. 168-169.

31 Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, pp. 40-41.

32 Macdonald Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire*, p. 51.

33 Alexander, *Travels from England to India*, p. 140. For the relief showing a seated sphinx, see Barnett, "Persepolis", *Iraq* 19/1, p. 62: No. 22, and plate 21/4. Colonel John Macdonald Kinneir, then British East India Company Envoy Extraordinary to the court of the Qajar resumed the excavations. He, his wife and eleven members of his delegation scratched their names at the Gate of All Lands (Simpson, "Making their marks: foreign travellers at Persepolis", <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, p. 40).

34 Curtis and Razmjou, "The Palace", *Forgotten Empire*, p. 84, fig. 46; Simpson, "Bushire and beyond: some early archaeological discoveries in Iran", *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, p. 158, and note 23.

British army in India, who resided for a while in Bushehr.³⁵ In 1825, Stannus “disinterred a number of sculptured stones, capitals of columns, etc.” A flight of locusts appeared a few days afterwards, and the peasants, being superstitious, immediately “set up to work and carefully covered up what the Colonel had taken so much pains to reveal.”³⁶ The location of his excavation is uncertain, but it could be wherever sculptures were exposed.³⁷ After his unsuccessful excavation, Stannus had to resort to an alternative. He is known to be the first who made casts of Persepolis reliefs, the procedure of which has been recorded again by Alexander who saw them in Bushehr.³⁸

The Resident shewed me several casts which he had taken from the sculptures at Persepolis. He effected his purpose in the following manner. He first made several long shallow boxes of wood, in which he put quick lime, applied them to sculptures, and allowed them to remain till thoroughly dry. The case was then taken off and sent to Bushire (Bushehr), containing the impression, from which the cast was again taken in lime. These, of course, are very valuable, as nothing can be more accurate. Processions were the subject of these casts.

These casts were first shipped to India whence they were sent to England. By 1827 the Department of Antiquities in the British Museum possessed twenty-seven casts of Persepolitan sculptures and inscriptions. The casts were almost immediately displayed in the British Museum where a selection can still be seen in the Enlightenment gallery which opened in 2003. Another series of Persepolis casts was made in 1844 by Lottin de Laval. Some fifty years later, an expedition to Persepolis instigated by

Cecil Harcourt Smith, the British Museum director, produced a larger set of casts. It should be noted, however, that the process of making casts in itself might not have been without harm to fragile reliefs of the site, removing any trace of paint that might have been survived. Besides, there is no indication that those casts were used by art historians, epigraphists, and philologists of the time.

Many residents and diplomatic envoys in the service of the British government in India who halted in Shiraz went to visit the ruins and added sculptural fragments to their personal collections. An example is given by Captain Moritz von Kotzebue (1789-1861) who accompanied a Russian mission to the Qajar Court in 1817. He met en route two English officers, Lieutenant-Colonel John Johnson and Captain Salter at Sultaniyeh. Kotzebue described how English envoys who proceeded to England from the East Indies, came by sea to the Persian Gulf, and took “pleasure in visiting the ruins of Persepolis”. He wrote that Johnson had brought with him several coins from Persepolis, where they were “dug out of the ground without difficulty”. Johnson showed him some broken pieces of bas-reliefs, having inscriptions on them.³⁹

Despite the removal of architectural elements from Persepolis, some important scientific discoveries continued to be made. In 1839, the French archaeologist and historian Charles Texier (1802-1871) travelled to Fars. His celebrated drawing of the winged figure in the Plain of Murghab has since been a prime source of study for the structures at Pasargadae.⁴⁰ Texier’s investigations at Persepolis

35 Simpson, “Bushire and beyond: some early archaeological discoveries in Iran”, *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, p. 159; “Rediscovering past splendours from Iran”, *British Museum Magazine* 36, p. 28.

36 Alexander, *Travels from England to India*, p. 137.

37 Simpson, “Pottering around Persepolis: observations on early European visitors”, *Persian Responses*, p. 349.

38 Alexander, *Travels from England to India*, pp. 97-98.

39 According to Kotzebue, Johnson sent to the Russian ambassador a piece which had been broken off the wing of a sphinx. For Kotzebue’s full account and reference, see Simpson, “Making their mark: foreign travellers at Persepolis”, <http://www.achemenet.com/ressources/enligne/arta/pdf/2005.001-Simpson.pdf>, p. 12.

40 Both Ker Porter and Texier produced drawings of the winged figure and the trilingual inscription which once surmounted it. For a full description and interpretation of the winged figure, see Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pp. 50-55, pls. 43-46. Photographs produced in Stronach’s report reveal that the state of conservation of this eroded figure has sadly deteriorated since the time of the earliest known photographs of the relief taken by Herzfeld in 1928, let alone the cast made by Weld’s team.

lasted ten days, and resulted in twenty-four drawings. His description of the ruins does not supersede that of his fellow countrymen, Flandin and Coste, but he rightly observed that the stone sculptures at Persepolis may well have been coloured originally. He proceeded to conduct chemical experiments and was able to show that there had, in fact, been paint on the reliefs.⁴¹ He thought that most of the buildings had been left incomplete, and he astutely suggested that the design on the façade of the rock-cut tombs, with a stage above, was a correct representation of the architecture of the palaces.

ILLUSTRATING PERSEPOLIS

Texier's proposed reconstruction of the structures was not apparently taken as seriously as were those by two other French artists, the painter Eugène Napoléon Flandin (1809-1876) and the architect Pascal Xavier Coste (1787-1879), who made the first drawings of the ruins deemed to be accurate and reliable in the late years of the 1840s.⁴² The two French artists were members of a large diplomatic mission sent by Louis Philippe to Persia under Count de Sercey between 1839 and 1841 with aim of replacing the English military advisors by military instructors from France. The role played by the Institut de France and the Académie des Beaux-Arts was significant in that they selected the best men ever found in France who could accomplish such a demanding mission. Flandin was an extremely talented Orientalist painter and artist with a taste for archaeology. Little is known about his years of training. He was an autodidact artist who also studied art in France and Italy. He first showed his work at the Paris Salon in

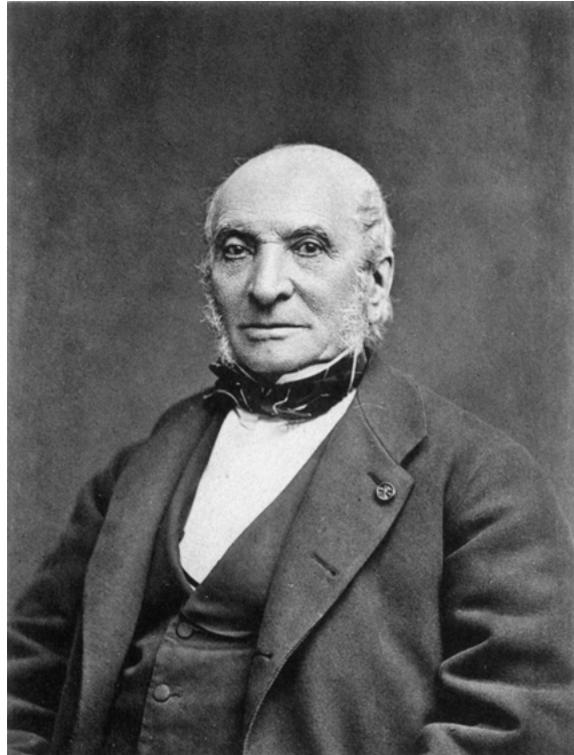


FIG. 7.3 Pascale Xavier Coste from the frontispiece of his *Mémoires d'un artiste*.

1836, and it was a success, especially his landscapes of Venice and Naples. In 1837, he was attached to the French army in Algeria as a military painter. That same year, he exhibited *La prise de Constantine* and other various Algerian and Belgian subjects at the Paris Salon. Financial difficulties forced him to sell some of his paintings in those years. His experience in North Africa was probably the main reason for the government to choose him as the painter of a new mission to the East.⁴³ Contrary to Flandin, Coste (fig. 7.3) had a solid architectural training. In 1829, he was appointed professor at the École d'architecture of Marseille, and his interest in Arabic and the architecture

41 Texier, *Description de l'Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie*, p. 189.

42 Thanks to the pioneering excavations carried out by Herzfeld in the early 1930s, Friedrich Krefter, the architect of the mission, was able to distinguish and record traces of paint on one of the reliefs in the palace of Xerxes (Krefter, "Persepolis in Farbe", *AMI* 22, pl. 1). Judith Lerner has studied in detail the use of colour on the relief identified by some scholars as the figure of Ahuramazda (Lerner, "The Achaemenid Relief of Ahura Mazda in the Fogg Art Museum," *BAI* 2, pp. 19-35). More investigations of colour on the reliefs were conducted in depth much later by the Italian restoration team (Tilia, *Studies and Restorations II*, 1978).

43 Calmard, "Flandin and Coste", *EncIr*, vol. 10, p. 35.

of the Islamic period was known to the members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. By the end of the 1830s, Coste had gained fame for his extensive travels and surveys in Egypt, North Africa, and Russia and for his architectural achievements, notably in and around Marseilles.⁴⁴ He was praised for his drawings, writings, and archaeological explorations as stated in a document preserved in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "The choice of the Academy has been primarily and unanimously fixed on Mr. Coste the architect, whose fine publication of the Arab edifices of Cairo as well as his work on monuments in Egypt sufficiently recommended the Academy's approval."⁴⁵

Flandin wrote the account of their Persian travels. He painted and drew picturesque views of the monuments and their architectural details. Coste took charge of making the plans and architectural measurements. Flandin and Coste spent some two months at Persepolis, painstakingly surveying the ruins and making drawings, sketches, and painting: "We were now making drawings and running from one bas-relief to another, exploring underground structures, columned halls, sarcophagi, and walls, and trying to fathom in the middle of this ocean of ruins where human mind becomes stupefied."⁴⁶ Aside from drawing and taking measurements, they uncovered the floor of the main hall and southern portico of the Palace of Darius to find out how many columns were used in those areas.⁴⁷ They also excavated some of the fallen sculptures in the area to the north of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.⁴⁸

Les fouilles me fixèrent d'une manière définitive sur le nombre des colonnes. Il y en avait dix sur la face du portique et deux sur sa profondeur. Pour antes à ce portique, ce sont deux taureaux en demi-ronde-bosse. La grande salle était ornées de cent colonnes de 94 centimètres de diamètre sur 11 m. 50c. de hauteur.

Coste, mentioning the fragility of stone structures, writes that one of the bull-headed capitals cracked and broke in pieces soon after they had uncovered it.⁴⁹ He was convinced that the buildings had been covered with ceilings in wood, and that their walls and decoration had been painted and gilt.⁵⁰ He also produced a number of reconstructions for the Gate of All Lands and the Apadana.⁵¹

By examining closely the structures of the site and their decorations, Flandin came to the conclusion that the site might have been used both as a sanctuary and palace, and that the decorated walls and reliefs represented the great ceremony of Nowruz.⁵²

Tout en considérant l'ensemble des ruines de Takht-i-Djemchid comme celles d'un ou de plusieurs palais, on ne saurait donc se refuser à admettre qu'au milieu de cette demeure du monarque, il s'élevait un sanctuaire consacré au culte du feu. Les sujets des bas-reliefs du perron de Takht-i-Djemchid s'expliquent dès lors, et ne peuvent plus être regardés comme les indices de la destination exclusivement religieuse qu'on voudrait attribuer aux édifices réunis sur le plateau de Persépolis. Il suffit, pour comprendre ces bas-reliefs si diversement interprétés, de chercher dans les mœurs actuels de la Perse une analogie que son passé ne repousse pas. C'est ce que j'ai fait, et ce rapprochement m'a conduit à voir, dans les sculptures du perron de Persépolis, la représentation d'une grande cérémonie dans laquelle la nation entière, par l'organe de ses délégués, vient rendre hommage au roi des rois. Cette cérémonie correspondait probablement à la fête du Norouz, qu'on célèbre encore aujourd'hui.

44 Calmard, "Flandin and Coste", *Enclr*, vol. 10, p. 37.

45 Chevalier, "Pascal Coste en Perse", *Regards sur la Perse antique*, p. 35.

46 Coste, *Mémoires d'un artiste: notes et souvenir de voyages (1817-1877)*, vol. 1, p. 280.

47 Coste, *Mémoires d'un artiste*, p. 294.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 300.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 308.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

51 These were reproduced recently in the catalogue *Regards sur la Perse antique*, pp. 186-187.

52 Flandin, *Voyage en Perse: relation du voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 161-165.

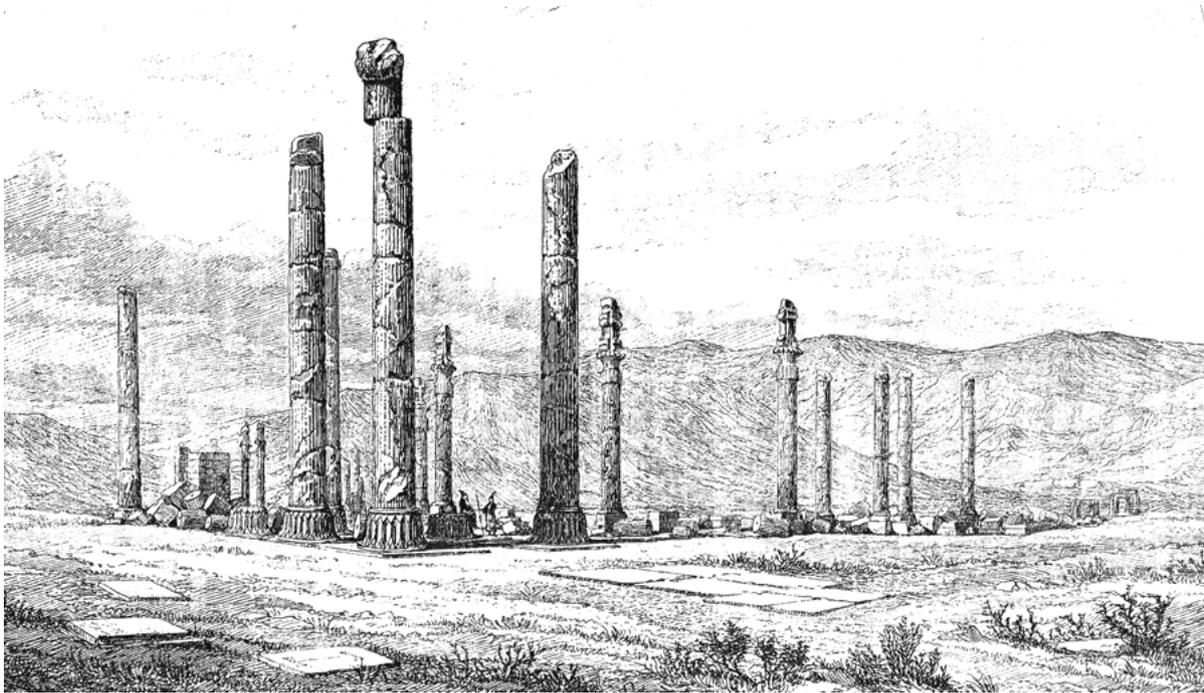


FIG. 7.4 View of the ruins of Persepolis by Eugène Flandin published in *Voyage en Perse*.

Flandin's description of the ruins of the city is equally important:⁵³

Au pied du mur qui soutient la grande terrasse de Takht-e Djemchid, du côté du sud, on voit un grand nombre de débris ayant appartenu à des fûts ou à des bases et à des chapiteaux de colonnes. On y découvre un canal construit pour les eaux et un puits ou réservoir desséché. Dans un ravin qui tourne au nord-est du côté du plateau du palais, on trouve d'autres constructions, une porte semblable à celles que j'ai décrites, les jambages portent deux bas-reliefs mutilés et méconnaissables.

The discomfort and difficulties encountered during their travels in Persia, did not prevent Flandin from admiring the ruins of Persepolis in his concluding words:⁵⁴

On peut dire que les monuments de Takht-i-Djemchid sont parmi ceux du vieux monde, les plus étonnants et plus admirables que le voyageur puisse rencontrer... Non! à Persépolis tout est art, tout est élégance.

Both Flandin and Coste left detailed accounts of their visit and work at Persepolis. Flandin's account contains some two hundred pages on the ruins of Persepolis, and includes interesting observations on the structures which likewise deserve attention.⁵⁵ Coste's maps and drawings of the structures were among the first accurate visual documents of Persepolis (fig. 7.4). The publication of Flandin and Coste is usually praised as an invaluable work of artistic graphic documentation. The three spectacular volumes of *Voyages en Perse de MM. Eugène Flandin peintre et Pascal Coste architect*, including 350 engravings and drawings, were published in Paris between 1881 and 1882. The publication was financed by the Institut de France. The French Ministry of the Interior acquired some hundred copies of the book, and sent it to public libraries all over France.⁵⁶ The problem of such publications is their

53 Ibid., p. 205.

54 Ibid., p. 211.

55 Ibid., pp. 145-242.

56 One set of these engravings sent to the town of Le Blanc, in central France, had been lost for more than one hundred fifty years. In 1978, Michel Maupoix, a teacher of literature in the town's school, rediscovered them in an excellent state of preservation in the storage room of the Hôtel de Ville of Le Blanc. The engravings were

sumptuous form with massive folios, which can be found only in the “special collection” of prestigious libraries, of which Arthur John Booth, the author of a remarkable book on the cuneiform inscriptions, sarcastically wrote in 1902: “No one untainted by African gold could contemplate their possession, and indeed it would be necessary to build an addition to an ordinary house to find them accommodations. They are not adapted for study, for they tax too severely the physical endurance of the reader... Sumptuously bound in red morocco, with richly gilt edges, they serve only to be rolled into the room of a palace in order that the pretty pictures that adorn them may be idly scanned amid the chatter of a tea-table.”⁵⁷

In 1854, at the time of the Crimean Wars, France decided to renew its relations with Persia in order to impede Russian influence. This is why a young diplomat named Comte Arthur de Gobineau joined the French delegation to Persia. The mission to Persia was the source of Gobineau’s *Trois ans en Asie* (1859), a lively account of his first voyage and sojourn in Persia, which is complemented by his abundant correspondence. Though Gobineau’s achievement as an Orientalist was hindered by his idiosyncratic, esoteric and racially prejudiced perspective, he was a keen observer of what he visited, and even his eccentric ideas on the ruins of Persepolis deserve attention here. It was on his first trip to Tehran that he recorded his impression of the ruins:⁵⁸

Ce n’était pas avec l’indifférence que je me sentais proche de Persépolis,... On est d’abord frappé de l’air jeune et de la fraîcheur de la vaste terrasse construite en blocs irréguliers et taillés à la règle de plomb et s’encastrant les uns dans les autres avec une précision de netteté que les siècles n’ont pas troublées.

He refrains from giving a description of the ruins. Instead, he concentrates on two topics, which he reckoned had not been sufficiently explained by other travellers. The first is the rock-cut tombs on the slope of the mountain at Persepolis:⁵⁹

On a prétendu que ces excavations étaient des tombeaux et que c’était là que les descendants de Darius se faisaient déposer après leur mort. Il est impossible d’admettre cette supposition. La religion de Zoroastre ne permettait pas l’inhumation des cadavres et eût considéré leur dépôt dans une caverne comme un sacrilège. Il fallait qu’ils fussent en plein air. Ensuite, pour les mêmes raisons dogmatiques, on n’aurait pu établir les sépultures royales si près de la résidence des vivants sans exposer ces derniers à des souillures.

After describing the structure in detail, Gobineau confidently writes that those “grottoes” served as fountains. In fact, the existence of a series of bushes and trees and a stone basin (still visible nowadays) in front of the tomb gave him the idea of a water source that had been deliberately set up in this particular spot. Gobineau also rejects the general idea of the burning of Persepolis by Alexander’s army. He argues that the palaces at Persepolis continued to exist after the fall of the Achaemenids as witness the inscriptions left by the Sasanians and rulers of the Islamic period:⁶⁰

L’autre opinion contre laquelle je veux dire quelques mots, c’est celle qui attribue à Alexandre la destruction de Persépolis. Nulle part on n’aperçoit les traces d’un incendie, et partant, il est difficile que les palais se soient écroulés, comme on veut généralement, par l’effet des flammes que le Macédonien aurait allumées lui-même de sa main conquérante, soit, comme le veulent les uns, pour plaire à une courtisane, soit, comme le disent les autres, pour venger les dieux de la Grèce jadis brûlés dans leurs temples par Xerxès. En général, il faut se défier beaucoup de ces grandes destructions opérées en

then the object of a successful exhibition in 1998, and were widely reprinted and made available in a much more convenient and affordable format: *Voyage en Perse 1840-1841*, Le Blanc, 1995; *Regards sur la Perse antique*, exhibition catalogue, Le Blanc, 1998.

57 Booth, *Discovery and Decipherment*, p. 115.

58 Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie (de 1855 à 1858)*, p. 180.

59 Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie (de 1855 à 1858)*, pp. 181-182.

60 Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie (de 1855 à 1858)*, pp. 183-184.

quelques heures par certains personnages illustres. Aujourd'hui personne ne croit plus qu'Omar ait brûlé la bibliothèque d'Alexandrie. Assurément ce n'est pas la bonne volonté qui manque aux hommes grands ou petits pour faire le mal; mais, par bonheur, leur puissance est le plus souvent moins absolue qu'on ne la suppose; des circonstances, dont on ne se rend plus compte à distance, se réunissent de façon à la paralyser, et, à défaut de force matérielle, les murailles célèbres ou les livres précieux ont leur prestige qui les protège.

The accurate surveys and drawings produced by Flandin and Coste provided the basis for the first modern architectural study of the structures at Persepolis by James Fergusson (1800-1886). Fergusson was a Scottish art historian and the author of a world history book of architecture. His knowledge of ancient Greek architecture on one hand, and Indian architecture on the other, enabled him to write one of the first detailed studies of architecture at Persepolis in *Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis Restored*, published in 1851. The decipherment of the cuneiform made the reading of Persepolitan inscriptions possible. As a result, the names of a number of palatial complexes could now be read. Fergusson was probably the first scholar who named the buildings on the platform either as indicated in their inscriptions or based on their architectural features. Accordingly, on his general plan of Persepolis, he named the Gate of All Lands as Propylaeum of Xerxes, the Apadana as Hall of Xerxes, Tachara as Palace of Darius, and Hadish as Palace of Xerxes. He also coined the name of Hall of a Hundred Columns for the large square building on the east side of the platform. He assigned the name of Central Palace to what is known today as the Council Hall. The edifice situated to the east of the Palace of Xerxes bearing no inscription was called the Southeast edifice. Fergusson also recognized remnants of the altered structure in the corner of the Terrace, which he called the South-west edifice. By examining the question of the location of the city of Per-

sepolis, he concluded that the rest of the city was where Istakhr afterwards was built. In attempting to restore the monuments, Fergusson wisely made use of the façade of the tomb of Darius, which he believed to be "an actual facsimile of his palace, cut in the rock".⁶¹ He rightly suggested that all the edifices were roofed with wooden beams placed upon the double-headed capitals. As for the question of lighting, he thought that the large porticoes at the Apadana might have provided ample light to the central hall; the lack of knowledge on the upper parts of the structures at that time prevented him from seeing that most of the buildings could gain light through the upper part of their walls and roof.⁶²

PHOTOGRAPHING PERSEPOLIS

In the nineteenth century, photography began to play a role in the history of the exploration of Persepolis. In the summer of 1850, Jules Richard, a Frenchman working in Iran, was sent on the order of Naser al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896) to take photographs of the ruins. Richard failed to receive the necessary funds to cover his travel expenses due to the government's financial problems, and he returned to Tehran without having fulfilled his task. Despite having served many years in Iran, Richard seems not to have grasped the significance of Naser al-Din Shah's command. Although this was a difficult period, when Amir Kabir was busy reorganizing the country's financial system, the king's passion for photography would ultimately have carried the day and would have guaranteed that a pay order would eventually come through. If Richard had fully understood the far-reaching impact a photographic record of the site might have had on his career, it is difficult to imagine that he would not have done the work either at his own expense or with borrowed funds pending the release of the Shah's pro-

61 Fergusson, *The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis Restored*, p. 124.

62 Ibid., pp. 136-137.

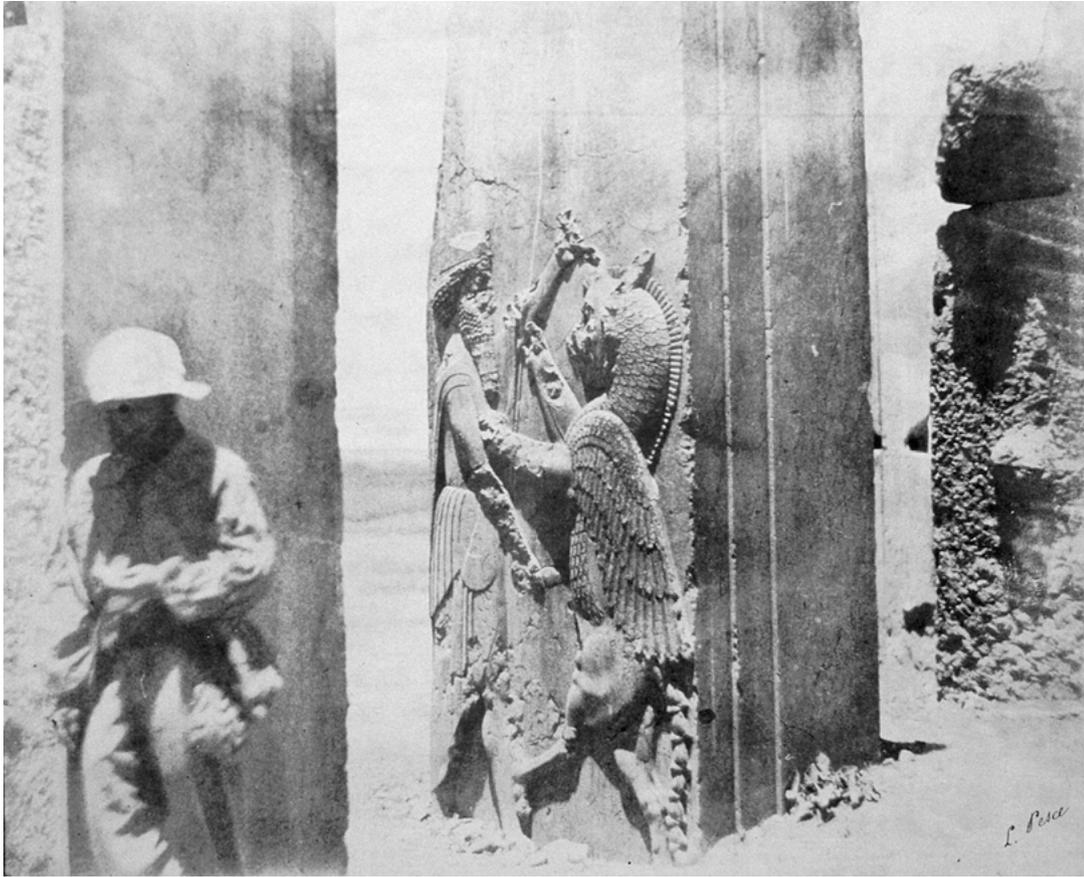


FIG. 7.5 The first known photograph of Persepolis by Luigi Pesce, showing a doorjamb relief in the Hall of a Hundred Columns, the autumn of 1857. Pesce himself is standing at left taking the time exposure (signed L. Pesce at lower right). Albumen print conserved in the Golestan Palace, Tehran, photograph no. 5 in the Shiraz and Persepolis album, 7356/ 335. (Photo: C. Adle).

mised stipend.⁶³ Eight years later, the honour of documenting the ruins by means of the most fascinating technical invention of the century went to Colonel Luigi Pesce, an Italian infantry officer from Naples, who took the first photographs of the ruins at Persepolis and Pasargadae. Pesce entered into the service of the Qajars in 1848 on a mission to train Iranian infantry units. He spoke Persian, Turkish, and Greek, and had a good knowledge of the history and geography of Iran. He

died in 1864 and was buried beside his wife in the Catholic cemetery of Dulab, south of Tehran.⁶⁴ Heinrich Brugsch of the royal Prussian legation met him in Tehran in the early 1860s and described him as “a friendly Italian officer in the service of the Shah.” Brugsch borrowed a few photographs from Pesce in order to make gravures for his travel book.⁶⁵ Pesce carried out the photographic expedition at his own expense, and presented his album to Naser al-Din Shah on the 15th of Ramezan 1274

63 Adle and Zoka, “Notes et documents sur la photographie iranienne et son histoire”, *StIr* 12/2, pp. 255-256. I am indebted to Dr. Chahryar Adle for putting at my disposition his vast knowledge on the history of photography in Iran. It was he who first drew my attention to the existence of Pesce’s photographs and Naser al-Din Shah’s idea for photographing the ruins of Persepolis.

64 Piemontese, “Apporti tecnici d’italiani in Persia nel XIX secolo”, *La Persia Qajar. Fotografie italiani in Iran 1848-1864*, p. 20. See also, Zoka, *Tarikh-e akkāsī va akkāsān-e pishgām dar Iran*, p. 19.

65 Brugsch, *Reise der K. preussischen Gesandtschaft nach Persien 1860 und 1861*, vol. 1, p. viii.

A.H./the 29th of April 1858 (fig. 7.5). In the dedication note he wrote:⁶⁶

This book [album] contains images of Takht-e Jamshid, the Tomb of the Mother of Solomon known as Mashhad-e Morqāb, Naqsh-e Rostam, and some other monuments. Despite many difficulties, and at my own expense, your servant set out on horseback from Tehran to Shiraz in order to take these pictures, and as God willed it, I was able to accomplish the task. I hope it gives His Majesty fulfilment.

In order to see the reliefs and monuments at Takht-e Jamshid, the rulers of the Western countries give huge sums of money to painters to travel to Iran, to draw and carry images of Takht-e Jamshid back to them, because there is not any other monument so astonishing as Takht-e Jamshid in the whole world; and there has yet been nobody from the West to capture the images of the ruins by the procedure of photography. Therefore, it is for the first time that your servant took photographs of the reliefs and ruined edifices of Takht-e Jamshid, and presented them to His Majesty.

Hence, I hope to receive His Majesty's gratitude and be rewarded.

On the 15th of Ramezan 1274 [H.] your servant, Pesce the Italian instructor in the royal infantry, presented the photographic images of Takht-e Jamshid."

The king, himself a passionate amateur photographer, was delighted and there is sufficient ground for believing that Pesce was indeed subsequently rewarded.⁶⁷ Pesce's photographs are conserved in the Golestan Palace in Tehran, and a few of them have been published recently.⁶⁸ Later, he sent photograph albums to Count Cavour of Italy and Wilhelm I of Prussia, saying that he had prepared "an album of Persia's most interesting monuments

unrecorded in photography by anyone hitherto and which the petitioner was the first to have the chance to photograph or conceive of so doing."⁶⁹ It is noteworthy that Naser al-Din Shah had already expressed his interest in photography in the service of archaeology by supporting the first Iranian excavation at Khorheh, where the work in progress was documented with photographs.⁷⁰ The archaeological expedition at Khorheh is probably the earliest excavation for which photography was used to record the finds. It thus preceded the use of this technology in archaeology by the Austrians at Samothrace in 1875.⁷¹

A major excavator of Persepolis was Prince Farhad Mirza Mo'tamed al-Dowleh (1817-1887) (fig. 7.6), son of Abbas Mirza, the celebrated crown prince of Fath-Ali Shah. Farhad Mirza became well-acquainted with the ruins of Persepolis when he served as governor of Fars. A fine writer of the Persian language, with an excellent knowledge of Arabic, Farhad Mirza also knew enough English to translate William Pinnock's *A Catechism of Geography* (London, 1826) under the title *Jām-e jam* (Tehran, 1272/1855; 2nd ed., Bombay, 1273/1856).⁷² In this book, the prince gives a description of the ruins and refers to the inscriptions.⁷³ Legendary for his cruelty in punishing the robbers and bandits of the province, the prince's intellectual and antiquarian curiosity in the nearby ruins was surely enhanced by his interactions with Flandin and Coste, whom he hosted in Shiraz in December 1840. Flandin tells story as follows: "I had seen the

66 The introduction in the album is in Persian, published in Zoka, *Tarikh-e akkāssi va akkāssan-e pishgām dar Iran*, p. 22 (the English translation is mine).

67 Adle and Zoka, "Notes et documents sur la photographie iranienne et son histoire", *StIr* 12, p. 256; Piemontese, "Apporti tecnici d'italiani in Persia nel XIX secolo", *La Persia Qajar*, pp. 15-16, 20.

68 Semsar and Saraian, *Golestan Palace Photo Archive: Catalogue of Qajar Selected Photographs*, pp. 127-132; Bonetti and Prandi, *La Persia Qajar. Fotografi italiana in Iran 1848-1864*, pp. 98-107, 198-203.

69 A. Piemontese, "The photograph album of the Italian diplomatic missions to Persia (summer 1862)", *EW* 22/3-4, p. 262.

70 Adle, "Khorheh: the dawn of Iranian scientific archaeological excavation", *TQ* 3-4, p. 231.

71 Daniel, *A Hundred and Fifty Years of Archaeology*, p. 166.

72 Eslami, "Farhad Mirza Motamad al-Dowla", *EncIr*, vol. 9, p. 260.

73 Fasai, *Fārsnāme-yeh Nāseri*, vol. 2, pp. 1537-1538. Farhad Mirza also supported the studies of Mirza Hasan Fasai (1821-1898) and obtained authorization from Nasereddin Shah for Fasai to compose a book on the geography and history of Fars, apparently as part of his own attempts to introduce administrative reforms; the result was the celebrated *Fārs-name-y-e Nāseri*, which is one of the best sources for the study of southern Iran in the nineteenth century.



FIG. 7.6 A lithograph showing Prince Farhad Mirza published in *Sharaf* newspaper no. 7, Rajab 1300/May 1883.

Prince in Tehran, and had been in charge of giving him some gifts. I went to welcome him, and we soon recognized each other. I was honoured to give him a tour of the ruins, explaining to him every detail. The Prince seemed to me as educated as could be a Persian. He did not ignore any fabulous detail of the reign of Jamshid as it was told by historians or rather by Persian storytellers.”⁷⁴

Based upon that early encounter, Flandin describes Farhad Mirza as extremely friendly (his reputation as an iron-handed governor notwithstanding) and specifically notes his eagerness to acquire knowledge.⁷⁵ In 1872, one of his sons, Soltan Oveys Mirza, produced a

series of photographs of the ruins.⁷⁶ These images represent the first systematic attempt to document the state of the ruins photographically for scientific purposes. The task was an ambitious one for the time. It reveals the depth of interest felt by the Qajar court in serious exploration of the country and its ancient past. As the reader has noticed, there is a hiatus of some four hundred years in our records at Persepolis in regard with Iranian inscriptions.

In January 1877, Farhad Mirza subdued a local rebellion in Fars, on the occasion of which he again visited the ruins. In March of that year, he sent Mirza Bāqer, his accountant,

74 Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. 2, p. 221.

75 Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. 2, p. 224. For an account of the prince’s method of rulership, see Navvab Safa, *Sharh-e hāl-e Farhad Mirza Mo’tamed al-Dowleh*, pp. 48-75.

76 The photographs are now in the Golestan Palace in Tehran (Chahryar Adle, personal communication).



FIG. 7.7 The first inscription of Farhad Mirza on the doorjamb of the Palace of Darius (Photo: A. Hakemi).

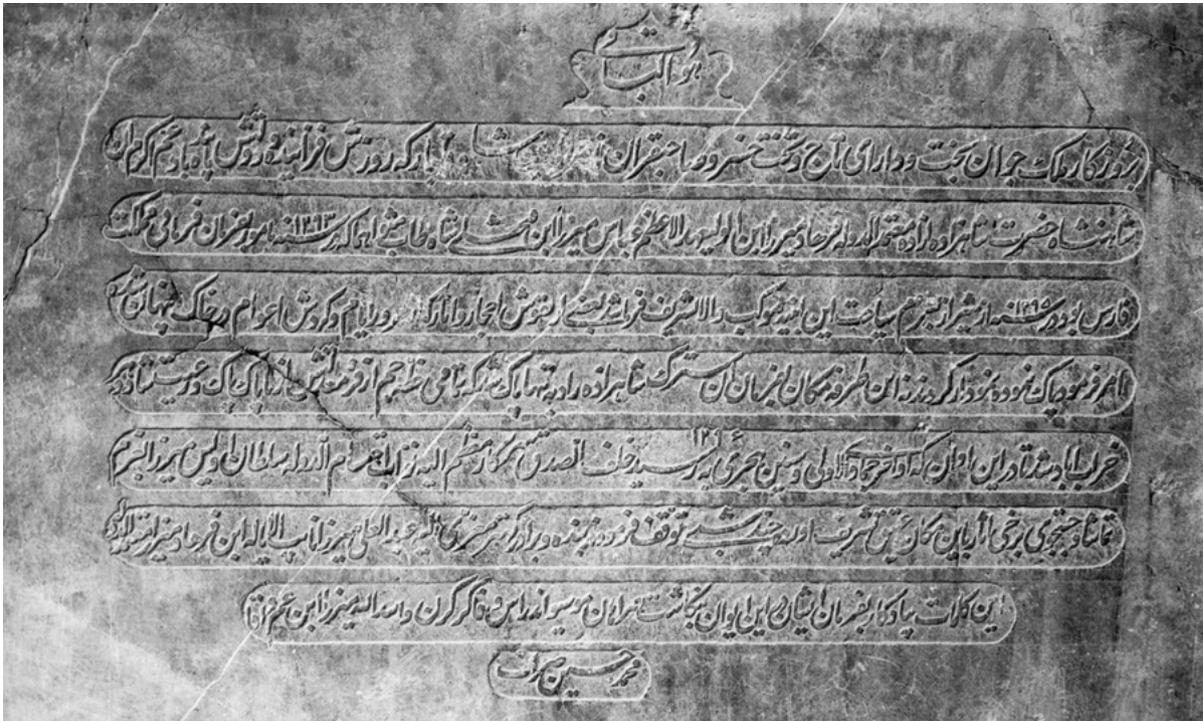


FIG. 7.8 The second inscription of Farhad Mirza (Photo: A. Hakemi).

to hire workers and dig at the ruins of Persepolis with the aim of finding “ancient tools” (*asbāb-e atiq*). He himself joined the dig a few days later. The excavation lasted from 14 March to 16 April of that year. The Prince had two inscriptions engraved on the stone doors of Palace of Darius. In the first one (dated to the 1st, Rabi al-sani, 1294 H./ 14 April, 1877) there is a clear mention of his excavations (fig. 7.7): “... His Highness came to Persepolis, and commissioned several thousand workmen to clear away the earth which had been heaped up through countless centuries on this platform, so that foreign and national travellers might view the carvings...”.⁷⁷ Although the prince may have sent a record of his investigations to the court in Tehran, there is no evidence of this. An account of his work was, however, incorporated into the newspaper *Vaqāye-e Ettefāqieyeh*, and has also been reproduced in Navvab Safa’s biography of Farhad Mirza.⁷⁸ From this we learn that the

work yielded “sculptures in stone, the location of a lofty edifice, a bridle and an iron plate that bore no figure on it.” The “lofty edifice” here is the building known today as the Hall of a Hundred Columns, or alternatively the Throne Hall.⁷⁹ Farhad Mirza’s son, Oveis Mirza, himself a photographer also spent a few days at the site to produce photographs as stated in the second inscription engraved on the right side of the previous inscription in a beautiful Nasta’liq in nine lines (fig. 7.8): “... in the year 1295 the princely procession arrived from Shiraz with the object of surveying these building. Some of the stone carvings and monuments in the course of time, and through the passage of ignorant people, had become obscured with earth, which he ordered to be removed, and not only this part of the site, but all the abode of Jamshid, for the glory of his justice, was cleared of deposited earth, by the order of that great and noble Prince, and the peasants became happy, and what was da-

77 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 228.

78 Navab-Safa, *Sharh-e hāl-e Farhad Mirza Mo’tamed al-Dowleh*, p. 131.

79 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 129.



FIG. 7.9 Persepolis in 1880s. Farhad Mirza's trenches in the Hall of a Hundred Columns are visible in this photograph published in Dieulafoy's *L'art antique de la Perse*, vol. II.

amaged was restored. At this time, which is the end of the month of Jamadiol-avval 1296, the true successor, His Highness Ehteshamodowleh Sultan Oveis Mirza came to this ancient site in order to view and examine some of the monuments, and stayed several nights...⁸⁰

From what can be seen from contemporary photographs (fig. 7.9), it seems that the prince's excavation consists of a large trench opened along the western interior of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.⁸¹ As with the motivations driving early European excavators at the site, Farhad Mirza had hoped to find bountiful artefacts. It is thus understandable that the brief but intensive excavation (on which some 600 workers may have been employed) was disappointing for him, and was thus soon abandoned.⁸² It is a pity that nothing is known of the locations of the objects revealed

by this dig. Muhammad Ali Minabi known as Sadid al-Saltaneh (1870-1941), writer and poet, visited the ruins in 1896, and heard about the excavations: "The late Farhad Mirza ordered to clear some of the columns and sculptures buried there, and as I heard, during the clearing a bridle in gold was discovered, which went to the prince".⁸³

Somewhat cynically, Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez acknowledged later that the clearing operation of Farhad Mirza had undertaken with such a massive deployment of labour served an important purpose for later visitors—both treasure-seekers and more serious investigators: "...in any case we may congratulate ourselves that such a whim ever came into his head. To it we owe the fact that recent travellers have found the approaches and the interior of the Hall of a Hundred Col-

80 Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 229.

81 Dieulafoy, *L'art antique de la Perse*, vol. 2, pls. 1-3; Andreas and Stolze, *Die Achämenidischen und Sasanidischen Denkmäler und Inschriften von Persepolis, Istakhr, Pasargadae, Shapur*, vol. 1, pls. 53-54.

82 It was the German Friedrich Stolze visiting Persepolis a few months later who reported on the number of workers (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through Travellers Eyes", *AchHist* VII, p. 29).

83 Sadid al-Saltaneh, *Al-tadqiq fi seyr al-tariq*, p. 57. It is unlikely that such a large gold object would survive.

umns cleared down to the floor, where Texier and Coste had their progress impeded by earth two or three metres high.”⁸⁴

The German scholars Franz Stolze, a geographer, and Friedrich Carl Andreas, a philologist who had worked on the Avesta, travelled in Persia. Stolze was member of a German expedition, led by the photographer Gustav Fritsch, that went to Isfahan in 1874 to observe a transit of the planet Venus. Stolze (fig. 7.10) had already visited Persepolis, Fasa, Darab, and Firuzabad when Andreas joined him in 1876.⁸⁵ They together explored archaeological sites in Fars and conducted some small-scale excavations at Persepolis.⁸⁶ They opened a trench in the central mound in the area located between the Tachara and the Hadish, and “found no more remunerative spoil than masons’ rubbish and chips”.⁸⁷ In an independent article, Stolze suggests the theory that the royal citadel of Persepolis with its triple wall existed but not at the present location of the ruins; he conjectures that it was situated in the immediate vicinity of Naqsh-e Rostam because it was better supplied with water, and because it was out of sight of the tombs.⁸⁸ In October 1877, less than a year after ending his own operations at Persepolis, Farhad Mirza gave permission for excavation to Andreas and Stolze. But, on behalf of the government the prince refused their request to take possession of any objects they might discover.⁸⁹ The Germans did not accept this condition and abandoned the idea of digging at the ruins. Nevertheless, they did take some three hundred photographs between June 16 and July 3, which they published in two large

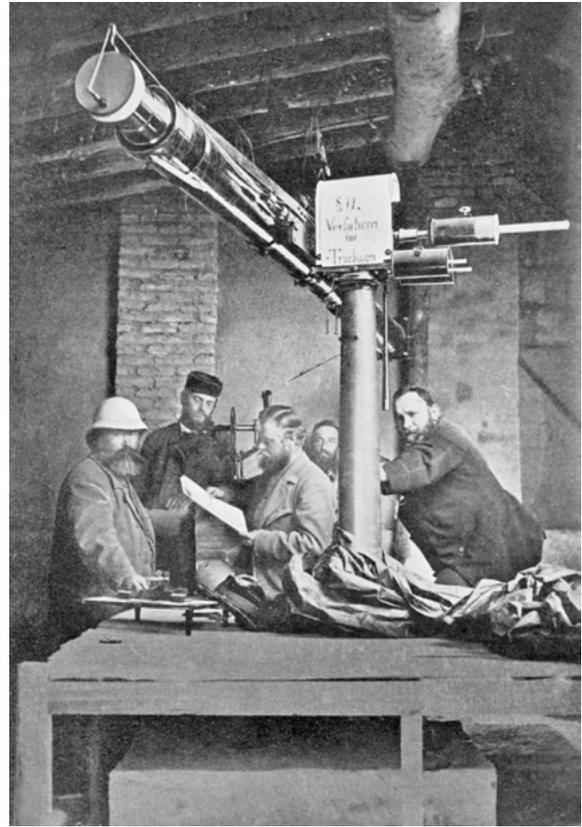


FIG. 7.10 The Venus Expedition, Isfahan, 1874. Stolze is standing at left (after G. Fritsch).

volumes.⁹⁰ Stolze found the vertical sun of summer better suited for photographing the inscriptions than the bas-reliefs, especially those situated in the deep shade of the doorways.⁹¹

The photographs give the impression that the results of this project did not live up to the effort and cost expended for it.⁹² The quality of these photographs is no match for the qual-

84 Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia*, p. 287.

85 A photograph of the German mission to Isfahan published by Fritsch has been reproduced here (Fritsch, “Fünfundvierzig Jahre Reisephographie”, *Denkschrift anlässlich des zwanzigjährigen Bestehens der Freien Photographischen Vereinigung zu Berlin*, pl. 2).

86 Huff, “Germany: ii. Archaeological explorations and excavations”, *EncIr*, vol. 10, p. 521.

87 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, p. 175.

88 Stolze, “Persepolis”, *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, vol. 10/5-6, pp. 258-259.

89 This is noted in *Vaqâye-e Etfefâqiyeh* and cited in Navab-Safa, *Sharh-e hâl-e Farhad Mirza Mo’tamed al-Dowleh*, p. 132.

90 Andreas and Stolze, *Persepolis: Die achaemenidischen und sassanidischen Denkmäler und Inschriften von Persepolis, Istakbr, Pasargadae, Shâpûr*, vol. 2, pls. 77-92.

91 Stolze, “Persepolis”, *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erkunde zu Berlin*, vol. 10/5-6, p. 253.

92 Barnett, “Persepolis”, *Iraq* 19/1, p. 57.

ity of those produced either before or very soon thereafter. A comparison of the ‘true-to-nature’ drawings by Flandin and Coste and the first ‘scientific’ photographs by Stolze shows that the photographs were often taken from the same point of view as the former drawings. Stolze’s desire to surpass the work of Flandin and Coste with photography does not seem to be a success.⁹³

Between 1881 and 1882, Marcel Dieulafoy took better photographs.⁹⁴ The photographic series of the ruins taken by Antoin Sevruguin, an Armenian photographer living in Iran, is similarly far more accomplished. Sevruguin produced an impressive collection of photographs of Iranian sites, on commission from Friedrich Sarre for Herzfeld and Sarre’s *Iranische Felsreliefs* published in 1910.⁹⁵ In a critical review of the publication of Schmidt’s *Persepolis*, volume 1, Richard David Barnett, longtime Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum, carefully compares different views of the ruins and reliefs. Barnett compares the engravings published by travellers such as Ker Porter, Flandin and Coste, with photographs taken either by Stolze or much later by Schmidt, in order to show the deterioration and destruction of bas-reliefs and decorative structures. As he rightly mentions the particular value of the illustrations left by travellers lies in the fact that they show the steady progress of deterioration of the sculptures by pillaging and natural forces.⁹⁶ It should be remembered, however, that at the time he wrote his article the restoration work at Persepolis had not begun. Most of the fallen pieces of sculptures were restored and placed back to their original position by an Italian restoration team in the 1960s and 1970s.

The emergent use of photography did not totally eclipse drawing as a medium for recording Persepolis. In the first decade of the twentieth century Forsat-al Dowleh, known as Forsat Shirazi (1854-1920) (fig. 7.11), travelled extensively in Fars and documented various monuments of the province. Forsat studied topography and painting, and his skill in painting enabled him to make paintings and drawings of various historic or archaeological sites, including Persepolis. After learning the basics of cuneiform script from a certain Henryk Dunlop, the representative of the Dutch



FIG. 7.11 A portrait of Mirza Nasir known as Forsat al-Dowleh Shirazi conserved in the Pārs Museum, Shiraz, published in Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*.

93 Stolze’s photographs suffer from a number of technical shortcomings such as the usual shadow, over-exposure, spots and cracks in the glass plates. Besides, the size of these glass plates made it difficult for a photographer to show a panorama of the Terrace (Achour-Vuurman, “Arranging early photographs of Persepolis in Dutch photo-collections by the ideas of David Hockney”, *Photo Searcher* 13, 2010, p. 17).

94 Dieulafoy, *L’art antique de la Perse*, vol. 2, pls. 2-21.

95 A small selection of these photographs were published in Bohrer, “Through Photographs: Sevruguin and the Persian Image”, *Sevruguin and the Persian Image: Photographs of Iran, 1870–1930*, pp. 33-53.

96 Barnett, “Persepolis”, *Iraq* 19/1, p. 57.

commercial enterprise in Shiraz, J. C. P. Hotz & Zoon, and an unnamed Italian merchant who happened to be sojourning in Shiraz, Forstater continued his study with the German linguist Oscar Mann and eventually wrote a treatise on the cuneiform script (*Nahw o sarf-e khatt-e Āryā*). He also learned the basics of the Pahlavi and was familiar with the Greek alphabet.⁹⁷ His best-known work, *Āsār-e Ajam*, is a collection of some fifty of his own drawings of the monuments, which was first published in Bombay in 1935. This publication stands as the first methodically illustrated description of the ruins of Persepolis.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, two remarkable publications deserve to be mentioned here. There were sufficient materials for Charles Chipiez and Georges Perrot to publish their specialized study of Achaemenid art and architecture as the fifth volume of their *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité*, which was published in 1890. Chipiez and Perrot described general characteristics of Persian architecture such as construction materials, the general principles of forms, construction methods, the columns, secondary forms, decoration, vaulted structures. The second was Marcel Dieulafoy's *L'art antique de la Perse* which, coupled with his excavations of the Achaemenid palace at Susa between 1884 and 1886, provided the basis for such a study. Published in five volumes and illustrated with superb photographs, the book remains an indispensable work of reference. In the first volume the monuments of Pasargadae are described and discussed: The second volume is devoted to a description of the ruins at Persepolis, the columns of which Dieulafoy considered to be copies of the Ionic orders. In the third volume the Persepolitan sculptures were presented on the assumption that "both Greek statuary and Persian statuary are derived from the schools of Assyria".⁹⁸

CURZON AND THE FIRST MODERN DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS

George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925), statesman, writer and traveler, was born into an aristocratic family in England (fig. 7.12). His education was at Eton and Balliol Colleges in Oxford. He pursued a political career and became a Conservative member in the House of Commons from 1886 to 1898, during which he travelled extensively in Eastern Europe, India, the Middle East, and North America. Curzon spent little more than three months in Qajar Iran, entering the country in late September 1889 and leaving it before the end of January 1890.⁹⁹ On his return to London, he concentrated on writing his important book,



FIG. 7.12 George N. Curzon from Ogden's Guinea Gold Cigarette cards, 1901.

97 Kasheff, "Forstat al dowleh", *Enclr*, vol. 10, p. 100-101.

98 Amiet, "Dieulafoy, Marcel-August", *Enclr*, vol. 1, p. 2.

99 Wright, "Curzon", *Enclr*, vol. 6, pp. 465-466.

Persia and the Persian Question, in which he attempted a thorough study of the ruins of Persepolis and a comprehensive synthesis of all knowledge of the site acquired to date. Of a total of some 1300 pages, he devoted 82 to the Achaemenid and Sasanian monuments of Fars. The study of the ruins at Persepolis covers 45 pages of volume 2, followed by an “artistic criticism” of Achaemenid art. He proudly writes on his achievement as follows:¹⁰⁰

Similarly, in the domain of Archaeology I have not forgotten that, while Persia is primarily the battleground of diplomatists and the market of tradesmen, it also contains antiquarian remains in great number that have employed the pens, and still engage the intellects, of famous scholars. Their labours have equipped me for a task upon which I have not perfunctorily entered, and in which the enthusiasm of the student may meet with a serviceable ally in the testimony of the eye-witness. To the professor, therefore, as well as to the politician and the student, I make my appeal.

As Bosworth reminds us, Curzon’s interest in ancient monuments was, in part, a reflection of virtually all members of his class in nineteenth century Britain.¹⁰¹ He knew well all the sources pertinent to the history of the Persian empire, the exploits of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, and the campaigns of Alexander against the Persians. He was also equipped with a wide array of literature on the history and geography of Iran, of which he boasts with his eloquent pen:

Of the works, between 200 and 300 in number, which have been written in European languages on Persia during the last five centuries, I have either read or have referred to nearly every one myself; and I can truthfully say that, among the many hundred references in these volumes, there is hardly one that is not an honest reference, i.e. the result of my own independent reading, instead of copied secondhand from any other work. To such of my readers as may smile at this exertion, I would reply in the words of Voltaire, ‘Remember what books I have read, in order to save you the trouble of reading them, and be thankful.

After giving a long list of previous travellers and scholars who had visited and studied the ruins, Curzon gives a detailed examination of the name of the site. One of his impressive tasks is a “tabulated catalogue” of the illustrations of the different structures at Persepolis given in the publications of Texier, Flandin and Coste, Stolze, and Dieulafoy.¹⁰² This required a keen knowledge of the site and its structures, a task that even today only one or two scholars could perform. Curzon approached Persepolis with a critical eye:¹⁰³

Indeed, I incline to think that the spectacular grandeur of Persepolis, no less than its present panoramic importance, have been uniformly, exaggerated by travellers. From a distance, as we approach it, across the wide plain of Mervdasht, it appears for long to be quite insignificant: and must, even when covered with its intact palaces and halls, have always been dwarfed by its surroundings. It is only as we ride up to the great front-wall, and still more as we wander among its megalithic ruins, that the full impression of its grandeur forces itself upon the mind. Few visitors, in all probability, are not disappointed with the first *coup d’oeil*. But every hour passed in scrutiny is a degree of admiration gained; until reconstructing in fancy, from the dismembered skeleton before us, the original Persepolis, glittering and pompous, as it emerged from the hands of Darius and Xerxes, we can well believe that no more sumptuous framework of regal magnificence was ever wrought by man.

Curzon’s description of the platform and its masonry and construction materials was only surpassed seven decades later by Schmidt’s precise report. At that time only eleven architectural units or structures were visible on the Terrace: the Great Staircase, the Porch of Xerxes, the Cistern, the Hall of Xerxes (the Apadana), the Palace of Darius, the Palace of Artaxerxes, the Palace of Xerxes, the Southeast edifice (the Harem of Xerxes), the Portico (Tripylon), the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and the Porch (the unfinished Gate). Five of these buildings bear inscriptions that name the king or kings responsible for the construction

100 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 1, p. ix.

101 Bosworth, “The Hon. George Nathaniel Curzon’s travels in Russian Central Asia and Persia”, *Iran* 31, p. 133.

102 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, p. 150.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 153.

of the edifice in question. Curzon's study of each building is accompanied by its dimensions, architectural features such as sculptures, columns, etc. As for the Hall of Xerxes, he seems to disagree with Fergusson's opinion that the walls were in mud-brick decorated with glazed tiles; he tends to agree with the reconstruction proposed by Perrot and Chipiez, who envisaged a vast hypostyle hall open on four sides.¹⁰⁴ As for the question of roofs, Curzon rejects once more Fergusson's accurate reconstruction based on the façade of the royal tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam:¹⁰⁵

For similar reasons I would reject the audacious theory with regard to the roofs of the Achaemenian palaces that was started by Fergusson...It is sufficient to say that beyond the fanciful analogy alluded to there is not a single argument worthy of the name in favour of such a contention. It is as though some future critic were to reason from Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square to any other Corinthian column of the Georgian age that might be found at a later date in a mutilated or stunted condition.

After providing a substantial description of the ruins, Curzon interestingly discusses such subjects as the burning of Persepolis by Alexander, the subterranean passages, and the identification of the ruins as the ancient Persepolis as described by Diodorus of Sicily. Curzon refutes Diodorus' description of the triple wall of Persepolis:¹⁰⁶

Why should all the buildings have survived in one spot, and all have perished in the other? The confusion between the two groups of royal tombs is a very natural mistake, and might easily occur; nor can any valid reasoning, in my opinion, be grounded upon this statement. What, then, are we to believe of the general description by Diodorus, or Clitarchus, whichever it really was, concerning the triple, concentric, lofty-walled enclosure?

That such a description could ever have been intended to apply to the existing platform, I am quite unable to credit.

Finally, he prefers to accept that Diodorus did not know or confused what they were writing about, "transferring to Persepolis the structural features which existed at Ecbatana and in other contemporaneous and neighbouring capitals, and seasoning a nucleus of fact with a magniloquent garniture of fancy".¹⁰⁷

Curzon's concluding remarks include a brief history of the destruction of the site after the Macedonian sack of the city (see chapter II). The other specificity of Curzon's account is his choice of photographs which are in no way a mere selection to decorate the text. His panoramic view of the ruins taken from the east (between pages 152-153 of volume 2) is significant in that it shows the long trenches in the Hall of a Hundred Columns opened by Farhad Mirza in 1877. It is true that Dieulafoy provides a slightly better photograph from the same angle in his *L'art antique de la Perse*. The photograph of the northern stairway of the Apadana is also interesting in that it shows the debris probably left from excavations by Ouseley, Gordon and Morier (between pages 160-161).

One of the surprising statements in Curzon's book is his "defence" of vandalism on the sculptures at the Gate of All Lands where a large number of visitors engraved their names, including a cavalcade of distinguished British travellers.¹⁰⁸ Curzon finds the records of many generations of European visitors an interesting part of the history of the site as he writes:¹⁰⁹

A structure so hopelessly ruined is not rendered the less impressive—on the contrary, to my thinking, it becomes the more interesting—by reason of the records graven upon it, in many cases with their own hands, by famous voyagers of the past, with whose names and studies the intelligent visitor to Persepolis is likely to be almost as familiar as he is with the titles of Xerxes, and whose forms seem in fancy

104 Ibid., p. 165.

105 Ibid., p. 166.

106 Ibid., p. 187.

107 Ibid., p. 188. In my visit of Persepolis in 2006, I remember meeting an English tourist lady reading the names of the British travellers at the Gate of All Lands. When I said that there were many British names on the portals, she proudly responded: "Naturally. We had a great empire as you did thousands of years ago!"

108 Bosworth, "Hon. George Nathaniel Curzon's travels in Russian Central Asia and Persia", *Iran* 31, p. 133.

109 Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, vol. 2, pp. 156-157.

once more to people the scene which they have revealed and illumined by their writings to thousands of their fellow-countrymen, who may never have had the chance of setting foot on Persian soil themselves. It was with no irritation therefore, but with keen interest, that I read here in large characters the name of Cap. John Malcolm, Envoy Extraordinary, Pleni-Potentiary, A.D. 1800, coupled with those of Captain William Campbell, Captain J. Colebrook, and G. Briggs, and ...

As Curzon's biographer, Kenneth Rose, writes, such an observation did not prevent him from putting his name on the monument:¹¹⁰

He did not pause to consider what his reaction would have been on finding that a succession of Persian gentlemen had recorded their visits on the pillars of Stonehenge.

He merely took out his knife and in a stone niche of the palace of Darius the Great added his own epigraph to the history of Persepolis. 'G. N. Curzon', he scratched, '1889.'

Curzon's description of Persepolis is not a travel account. It is an outstanding presentation of a long phase of early-modern graphic and archaeological exploration, which has been only partially surpassed by later publications. In a sense his study marks the end of the pre-scientific era of archaeology at Persepolis.

WELD-BLUNDELL'S EXPLORATION

The late nineteenth century saw a new spirit emerging—one which increasingly recognized other ambitions beyond mere treasure-hunting for museums and collectors. An Englishman named Herbert Weld-Blundell led an expedition to Persepolis which left home in November 1891 “for the purpose of taking moulds of the more prominent sculptures, with a view to their preservation and reproduction.” Herbert

Joseph Weld-Blundell was born in 1852 and was educated at Stonyhurst College in northern England. He was a typical adventurer/explorer of the Victorian era, who travelled in the Middle East and Africa between 1891 and 1905.¹¹¹ He arrived in Shiraz in January 1893. Lord Savile and Cecil Smith had obtained the necessary royal permission from Mozaffar al-Din Shah. These two defrayed the travel costs of the expedition and Weld undertook at his own expense the work of superintending the project.¹¹² Weld's report to the Ninth Congress of Orientalists in London was laced with disdainful criticism of the Persian government for its positions in relation to Persepolis. He complained of the difficulties experienced in obtaining a work permit, describing how he had shrewdly managed to obtain local permission from the current governor of Fars: “By acting on the principle of not asking too close a definition of my powers, I was able, without distinct infringement of the laws of the Medes and Persians, to take a surreptitious peep into the hitherto sealed book”.¹¹³ Turning to more substantive matters, Weld-Blundell established the goals of his enterprise in specific opposition to the methods prince Farhad Mirza had employed earlier in the century while governor of Fars: “...not for the purpose of research, but with the idea of something valuable turning up.”

Contrary to most of his predecessors, who were generally in quest of antiquities, Weld's aim at Persepolis was to obtain “data for drawing conclusions and assisting any future efforts in the same direction, supposing at any future time powers for excavating on a large scale might be possible.” He mainly dug at four areas of the Takht: the area to the east of the Harem, Palace ‘H’ (the so-called Palace of Artaxerxes III), the Palace of Xerxes, the

110 Rose, *Superior Person. A Portrait of Curzon and his Circle of late Victorian England*, p. 226.

111 He discontinued the name of Blundell in 1924 prior to inheriting the Weld seat at Lulworth. A full biography is given by Simpson, “Bushire and beyond: some early archaeological discoveries in Iran”, *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, p. 160.

112 Simpson, “Great Britain viii. British archaeological excavations”, *EncIr*, vol. 11, p. 253.

113 Weld-Blundell, “Persepolis”, *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists (Held in London, 5th to 12th September 1892)*, vol. 2, p. 538.

mounds behind the Palace of Darius and the Palace of Xerxes (Palace 'G'), and the courtyard to the north of the Palace of Darius. He did not apparently obtain the necessary permission to "touch anything below the surface". He began his "hurried and unostentatious excavations" near the South-east palace or the Harem:¹¹⁴

It was at this farthest end from the usual entrance to the platform, in order to avoid observation and inconvenient curiosity, that I commenced work. Starting at a line of foundation-stones indicating a wall running parallel to the retaining wall of the platform, and assisted by change in the colour of the ground, I dug out the base of a pillar.

It proved to be of the same "reflex calyx" pattern as those of the Hall of a Hundred Columns. Continuing, we found three other bases arranged in a square at a distance of 9 feet 1 inch from centre to centre of the drum. We dug on each side to find the direction of the columniation. Starting from along this line of the most easterly bases and carrying a trench straight towards the façade of the palace, we found no more traces of pillars, but everywhere a smooth flooring of cement of a rich red colour, and wherever we came upon it, quite unfaded and unbroken. A trench dug from the four pillars at right angles to the last trench showed two more pillars in line with the front row.

Weld does not give any plan or drawing of his excavations. The red colouring that he found in the Harem is the floor surface of the Treasury which he struck when he trenched through the superposed floor of the Harem building.¹¹⁵ Aside from digging vaguely in and around the Palace of Xerxes, Weld dug a third trench in the Hall of a Hundred Columns, where he found fragments of charcoal.¹¹⁶ He then turned to what he calls the "tumulus" which is the central mound or Palace 'G' in Schmidt's nomenclature. He mentions a predecessor of his who had conducted excavations "both at this spot and in the level space between the Palace of Darius and that of Xerxes". The individual in question had made "two cuttings in

the shape of a cross through the apex of the tumulus" which Weld decided to follow by deepening the trenches. He found a "subterranean passage, large dressed blocks" and parts of a decorated staircase. He also reports that the only architectural find was a fragmentary column with remains of paint in the flutings.¹¹⁷ His next work was at the "Hall of Xerxes" or the Apadana (fig. 7.13). The excavator uncovered a few finds in the north-east corner of the Apadana:¹¹⁸

Turning now my attention to the tumuli at the angles of the hall, I dug a cross-shaped trench through the centre of the largest one at the northern angle; I have numbered them on the Plan T4 to T5. At a point in alignment with the edge of the bases of the porticoes C and D in T4 and T5, there was a space of about 3 feet in breadth where the stone was rough and uneven. Inside of this line we found amasses of charcoal and decomposed plaster, till we got to the centre, where we found a square stone with a hole running through it, which might have served for the hinge of a door or the galley of a door. Close to that stone, buried in masses of charcoal, we found a quantity of red pottery vases, an iron axe-head, nails with round heads, and a copper pot full of pieces of bone and charcoal. Humble implements, but interesting as relics of an historical conflagration. They had been cracked by the fallen rafters and some blackened by the heat.

In this area, Weld's exploration was both disastrous and interesting. Disastrous because he deliberately removed part of the original pavement of the main hall by "picking it up by a mattock" to convince himself that the surface of the floor was covered with a solid film of clay "moistened by rains and baked in a blazing sun into the consistency of brick". Moreover, as confident as a British adventurer would be in an Oriental country and encouraged by his audacious endeavour, he cut through the southern mud-brick wall of the main hall on either side of a slab marked 'Z' in his schematic plan. The work is not without some interest because it showed the ingenious

114 Ibid., pp. 538-539.

115 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 222, note 10.

116 Weld-Blundell, "Persepolis", p. 540.

117 Ibid., p. 541.

118 Ibid., p. 546. The bronze bucket has been published in Simpson, "Bushire and beyond: some early archaeological discoveries in Iran", *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, p. 162, fig. 152.

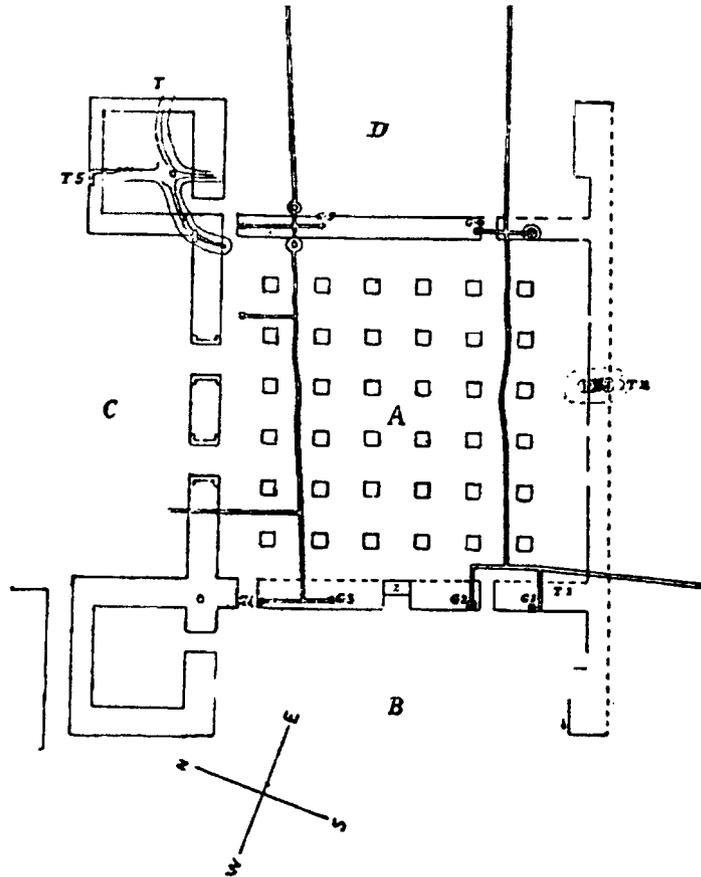


FIG. 7.13 Plan of the "Hall of Xerxes" with Weld-Blundell's trenches (after Weld-Blundell).

subterranean drainage system of the ceiling of the large columned hall.¹¹⁹

Putting aside the shortcomings of his excavations on the Terrace, Weld's significant contribution lies in his exploration of the remains in the Southern plain (figs. 7.14-7.15). The group of column bases and stone fragments heaped at the location of Edifice 'E' (the large columned hall outside the Terrace) drew his attention. But, here he made a mistake of counting sixteen, instead of ten columns for the building in question (four in the central hall and six for the three porticoes). In his visit to Pasargadae to see the work in progress for making squeezes of the relief of the winged-figure, he examined the architectural struc-

tures of Palace 'S'. He briefly excavated the building to notice the "same light-coloured tracks outlining a square building", and found out that a few centimetres below the surface were foundation-stones, and "inside of the periphery two rows of twelve bases of pillars each". This experience apparently helped him understand the plan of Edifice 'E' which he sounded upon his return to Persepolis.¹²⁰ Weld's principal objective was to learn as much as possible about the architectural organization of the site and its defensive structures. His opinion was that the exterior fortifications ran from the Unfinished Tomb to a point facing the north-western corner of the Terrace, which was later proved to be true.¹²¹ A series

119 Weld-Blundell, "Persepolis", pp. 544-545.

120 Ibid., pp. 548-549.

121 Mousavi, "Parsa, a stronghold for Darius", *EW* 42/3-4, p. 15.

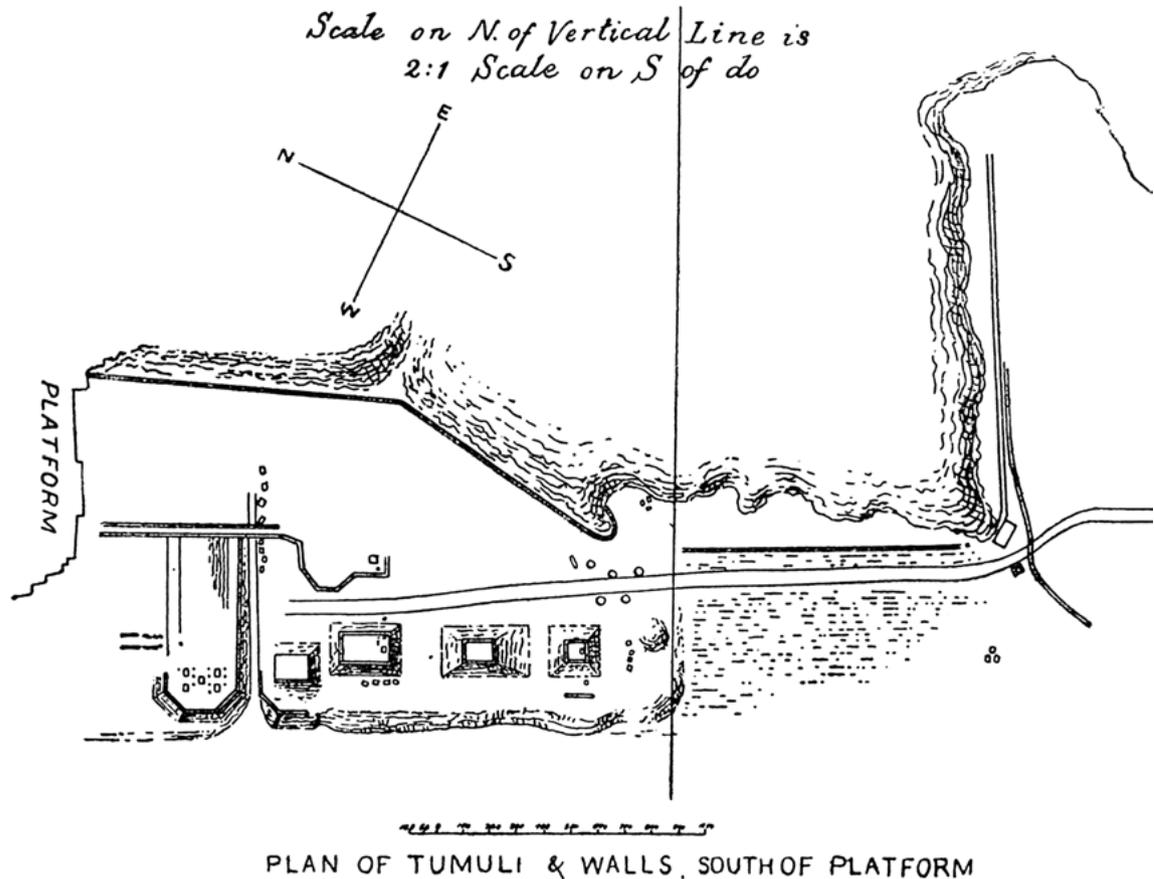


FIG. 7.14 A sketch plan of the remains in the southern plain drawn by Weld-Blundell (after Weld-Blundell).

of low mounds that still existed in front of the grand staircase at that time indicated the direction of an enclosure wall parallel to the western edge of the Terrace. Continuing southward, he found a group of “tumuli” that bore traces of constructions.¹²² His other important contribution to the study of the topography of the site lies in his reconstruction of the lines of fortification on the eastern side of the Terrace and on top of Kuh-e Rahmat. In this regard, he concludes as follows:¹²³

The general result of the researches I have laid before you would give the hill and platform of Persepolis the position of an acropolis strongly fortified and self-contained, and to a certain extent isolated from the city of which it formed the royal suburb and the national treasury... At Persepolis the city is

in the gorge of the hills in a naturally defensible position, and the basileon and treasuries are separated by a distance of about two miles.

In addition to these efforts, Weld’s observation on traces of paint preserved on the Persepolis sculptures was of significant importance. While uncovering the lower part of the reliefs decorating the entrance of the Hall of One Hundred Columns in order to make squeezes of them, the Italian craftsman Lorenzo Giuntini working at this task found that the surface was covered with a coating of blue paint, which came away readily to the touch as fine blue powder. Weld had this powder examined in London by Flinders Petrie. It was found to be silicate of copper, or “Egyptian blue”. Under Weld’s direction several traces of paint

122 Weld-Blundell, “Persepolis”, pp. 550-551.

123 Ibid., p. 556.

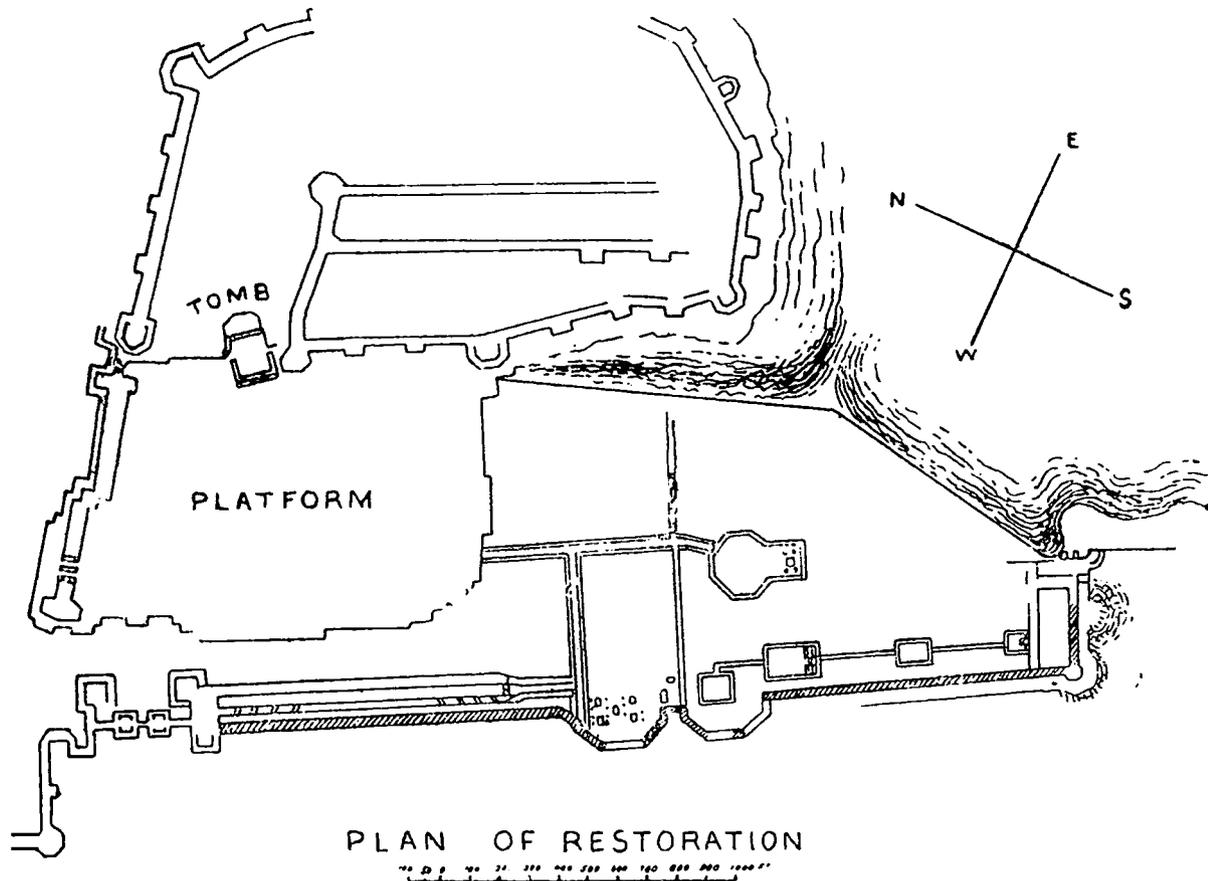


FIG. 7.15 A sketch map showing the platform and the city (after Weld-Blundell).

were also found in the Palace of Darius and the so-called Palace of Artaxerxes III. His persistence in gaining chemical evaluation of the retrieved blue substance was a notable indication of the scientific inclinations that set him apart from earlier investigators and forecast an agenda for future research.¹²⁴

With the squeezes made during this campaign at Persepolis, Weld's craftsmen were able to make plaster moulds from which casts could be produced. In 1931, these were exhibited for the first time in the British Museum on the occasion of the Exhibition of Persian

Art held in the Royal Academy in London.¹²⁵ A selection of the casts are now on display at the British Museum.

In March 1892, Truxton Beale, United States Minister in Tehran, obtained permission from the Qajar government to remove some objects from Persepolis. Upon reaching Persepolis, Beale wisely realized that "nothing very characteristic could be obtained without grossly defacing the ruins". When Beale arrived at the site, he found Weld engaged in taking moulds of the bas-reliefs and cuneiform inscriptions. Weld presented the moulds to the

124 Chemical analyses of the "Egyptian blue" remnants from Persepolis were published in Schmidt's report (*Persepolis I*, pp. 133-35). A systematic survey of colour in Persepolis appears in Tilia's *Studies and Restorations II*, pp. 31-69, but with acknowledgment that more comprehensive chemical analysis still needs to be done. Alexander Nagel recently studied the question of the polychromy of the Achaemenid sculptures and reliefs, the results of which are yet to be published (*Colors, Gilding and Painted Motifs in Persepolis: Approaching the Polychromy of Achaemenid Persian Architectural Sculpture, c. 520-330 BCE*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2010).

125 Simpson, "Great Britain: viii. British archaeological excavations", *EncIr*, vol. 11, p. 253.

U.S. Minister, and suggested that the U.S. National Museum should cooperate in the work. Later, in Washington D.C., the Museum designers succeeded in making excellent casts from the paper moulds, which were on display for some time.¹²⁶

An incident of robbery from Persepolis sealed the nineteenth-century activities at the site. In the spring of 1900, an employee of the British embassy named John Ford, managed to bribe one of the workers in the Post Office in Shiraz to remove two fragmentary reliefs from the ruins. Ford sent the fragments to Bushehr among his personal belongings in order to take them to England. Iranian customs officials inspected the boxes, the affaire was revealed, and the fragments were finally withheld pending their return to Shiraz. The robbery was reported to the Iranian Foreign Minister, Moshir-o dowlleh. Cecil Spring-Rice, the British Chargé d’Affaire regretted the incident and asked the British Consul in Bushehr to cooperate with Iranian officials to retrieve the pieces. The incident was subsequently reported to the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who demanded the dismissal of J. Ford.

From the beginning of the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century there are five outstanding descriptions of the ruins of Persepolis. The first, written between 1617 and 1619, is by Figueroa whose report has the novelty of identifying the ruins with the city of the Persians mentioned in Classical sources. Then fol-

lows Della Valle’s descriptions in the form of a series of letters which he wrote to his friend, Schipiano, around 1621. Chardin gave the first thorough description of the ruins in the 1660s and 1670s. The year 1703 is marked by De Bruijn’s visit of the site, whose illustrated account surpassed previous descriptions. Niebuhr’s accurate description of the ruins and his copies of the inscriptions stand out in that they provided the basis for the decipherment of the cuneiform script. Both Ouseley and Morier left detailed descriptions of the site, which were later complemented by Ker Porter’s detailed account and his far better illustrations. Nevertheless, all these early nineteenth-century descriptions, as accurate as they could be, were written prior to the decipherment of the cuneiform in 1846. French accounts on Persepolis are praised rather for their outstanding illustrations and plans than their detailed description of the monuments.

By the last decade of that century, a number of inventions and developments had paved the way for a far better study of Persepolis: the large number of sources on Persepolis (Classical texts and travellers’ accounts); the decipherment of the cuneiform, which made possible the identification of the individual structures on the Terrace; the invention of photography and the improvement of photographic techniques; and the political stability of Iran under the Qajars, which made journeys within in Iran much easier.

126 Adler, “Two Persepolitan casts in the U.S. National Museum”, *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, report of the U.S. National Museum*, pp. 751-753.

VIII

PERSEPOLIS AT THE DAWN OF SCIENTIFIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAN

Archaeology in Iran, much the same as in other countries, made its debut through the quest for antiquities and curiosity about the past. Recorded explorations and excavations in Iran go back to the first decade of the nineteenth century. From the middle of that century onwards, archaeological activities were intensified, and Naser al-Ddin Shah (r. 1848-1896), the Qajar king, was, in fact, a patron of exploration and the recording of ancient monuments.¹ The intricacies and fascinating development in the early decades of the twentieth century led to the beginning of controlled excavations at Persepolis.

EARLY STEPS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF IRAN: AN OVERVIEW

The first systematic archaeological excavation in Iran goes back to the mid-nineteenth century. It was the site of Susa in Khuzestan that was first explored by an Englishman named William Kennet Loftus, from 1849 to 1850. The British believing the mounds at Susa to be exhausted, lost interest and gave up the excavations and concentrated instead on sites in Mesopotamia.² Susa had to wait until 1884, when the French engineer and architect, Marcel Dieulafoy and his wife, Jane, began to dig up the site's treasures.

Nine years after the departure of the Dieulafoys, with the intensive support of French diplomacy, the Qajar government granted a new concession that enabled France to resume and expand their excavations in Iran, and particularly at Susa. In 1894, René de Balloy, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of France in Tehran, obtained the approval of a convention that granted France the exclusive right to excavate in Persia. Five years later, with the newly created *Délégation en Perse*, the French obtained a total concession for all archaeological excavations in Iran for an indefinite period.³

These treaties, better known as the Monopoly on Archaeological Excavations, gave total freedom to the French Delegation in Persia to carry out explorations in the whole territory of Persia, but the site of Susa gradually became their exclusive centre of interest in the country. The excavations there were funded by the French Ministry of Public Instruction with an exceptional budget approved specifically for the Delegation in Persia. The work was also heavily supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its embassy in Tehran. In this way, the work of the French Delegation in Persia was not only a matter of culture, science, and the acquisition of art objects, but was a question of national pride coupled with an interest in political expansion and influence. During the early years

1 Adle gives an interesting account of the excavations carried out at Khorheh under the patronage of the Qajar king (Adle, "Khorheh: the dawn of the Iranian scientific excavation", *TQ*, no. 3-4, pp. 226-39).

2 Curtis, "William Kenneth Loftus and his excavations at Susa", *IA*, p. 15.

3 The Convention was concluded on 12 May, 1895, with a renewal in 1900. The latter assured the perpetuity of conducting archaeological explorations in the country and the right of possessing all the discoveries from Susa for France. The original text and the Persian translation of the Conventions have been reproduced in Karimlou, *Tārāj-e Mirās-e Melli*, vol. 1, pp. 232-234, 250-260; see also Nasiri-Moghaddam, *L'archéologie française en Perse et les antiquités nationales (1884-1914)*, pp. 347-349 and 357-362; N. Chevalier published the printed text of the treaties but not the original documents (Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient 1842-1947*, pp. 512 (for the Franco-Persian treaty of 1895) and 515-516 (for the Franco-Persian treaty of 1900).

of the Monopoly, the Delegation carried out explorations outside the plain of Khuzistan, expanding its work to the north and south of the country. Nevertheless, there was an inevitable Susocentrism in the work of the Delegation, which increased because of the departure of Jacques de Morgan, the founder of the Delegation; this was especially marked after the First World War, with a cut in the budget of the Delegation.⁴

PERSEPOLIS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The first third of the twentieth century was a time of important socio-political changes which considerably affected the future of archaeology in Iran. The first significant event was the Constitutional Revolution of Iran in 1906, which engendered and promoted new ideas, notably a consciousness of Iran's cultural heritage and economic resources, along with the stimulation of nationalistic feelings in defence of the historical monuments of the country.⁵ In 1910, San'i al-Molk, the Minister of Culture, took the initiative to create the first antiquities service, the direction of which was entrusted to Iraj Mirza, the famous poet and a cultural personality of his time.⁶ In 1916, Momtaz al-Molk, the Minister of Public Instruction, opened the first antiquities museum in Tehran with 270 objects. Both of these institutions continued to function until the early years of the 1930s. Two important interrelated events facilitated the beginning of scientifically controlled archaeological excavations

at Persepolis. Firstly, the emergence of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 promoted nationalistic feelings which created broad-based interest in the site as a national monument. Secondly, and as a direct result of the policy of the new government, the abolition in 1927 of the French Monopoly on all rights to conduct archaeological explorations in Iran increased international attention on Iran and opened the door to multiple possibilities. The distressed condition of the ruins had already become a significant concern among the Iranian intelligentsia. Their condition became a point of discussion with other internal groups as well. Competing interests of European and American groups soon became a major factor in the history of archaeology in Iran in general, and at Persepolis in particular. In the autumn of 1922, Reza Khan, acting as Minister of War under Ahmad Shah, had visited Persepolis for the first time (fig. 8.1) on his way to the port of Bushehr to welcome the return of Ahmad Shah from Europe. He expressed his distress over the poor condition of the ruins. In this short visit in company of officials, he was outraged by the sight of villagers on horseback riding among the ruins on the Terrace, and he said: "An enclosure needs to be set up here to prevent further damage to Takht-e Jamshid. We must seriously think of doing something for here".⁷ The impact of that visit remained with him after he became Reza Shah, the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty.

In 1923, a group of the Iranian elite and intellectuals founded the Society for National Heritage in Tehran (*Anjoman-e Āsār-e Melli*), in order to "promote public interest in ancient

4 Mecquenem, "Les fouilleurs de Suse", *IA* 15, pp. 20-22.

5 It should be noted that nationalism is not an outcome of the twentieth century contrary to the general trend trying to present it as a consequence of nationalistic feelings in the West. Nationalism had already been a factor in the history of Persia as early as the ninth century (Zarrinkub, *Do Qarn Sokout*, pp. 197-199); the rise of the Buyid dynasty in the tenth century reveals another aspect of Iranian nationalism vis-à-vis non-Iranian rulers; it was also an ideological tool in the hands of the Safavids who established the first ethno-religious identity for Iran in the 16th century. Moreover, the *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi relevantly reflects nationalistic and patriotic feelings. It is, however, interesting to notice that the early 20th century witnessed a revival of Iranian nationalism in response to increasing foreign pressure and influence.

6 According to some published official documents, it seems that the creation of an antiquities office preceded the opening of the museum by Momtaz al-Molk (Afsar and Mousavi, *Pāsdāri az Athār-e Bāstān dar Asr-e Pahlavi*, pp. 40-45).

7 Mostafavi, "Amānatdāriy-e khāk", *BT* 11, p. 3.



FIG. 8.1 Reza Shah's first visit to Persepolis in 1922 (Photo © Anjoman-e Āsār va Mafākher-e Melli).

knowledge and crafts, and to preserve antiquities and handicrafts.” One of the primary goals of the Society was to “build a museum and library, and to employ knowledgeable specialists for their maintenance, and the proper recording of all the remains, the protection of which as national heritage would be necessary.”⁸ The Society organized conferences, and invited Ernst Emile Herzfeld to give lectures on the pre-history and history of Iran. One of the first tasks of Herzfeld was to present a comprehensive list of eighty-eight monuments and sites, and record them as historical monuments.⁹ The creation of the So-

ciety was a result of Reza Shah's social and economic reforms. The founding members of the Society were all prominent elite figures and patriots, and some of them held key political positions in the nascent Pahlavi government: A. H. Teymourtash (the Court Minister), M. A. Foroughi (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Prince Firouz Mirza (Minister of Finance), Moshir al-Dowleh Pirnia (the former Prime Minister at the time of the Constitutional Revolution).¹⁰ It is interesting to note that it was the German archaeologist, Herzfeld, who drew the logo of the Society.¹¹ He remained one of the favourite lecturers of the

8 Published in *Anjoman-e Āthār-e Melli*, Declaration, 3-4, Tehran, 1351 H.S./1973.

9 Herzfeld, “Reisebericht”, p. 284.

10 For a complete list of the members of the Society, see Mostafavi “Talash dar rāh-e khedmat be athār-e melli va omid beh āyandeh”, *GB* 3, p. 392.

11 Kröger, “Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Sarre”, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 66.

Society, and its only foreign member, during the first ten years of its existence.¹² Preceding one of Herzfeld's presentations on 18 May 1927, Mohammad-Ali Foroughi, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the founding members of the Society, gave a short lecture at the end of which he spoke about Persepolis and Herzfeld as follows:¹³

I do not need to speak in detail of Takht-e Jamshid and its pitiful condition, you gentlemen have all heard about or seen it... For its protection from robbery, it is necessary to put a metallic or wooden enclosure with a gate, and to employ guards to control the entrance of the site, and to build a residence for them nearby, etc... But all these require huge expenses, and I do not know when the time would come. It is warm here, and I must not hold you gentlemen anymore with my words. I had better end my talk, and give the turn to Professor Herzfeld.

Herzfeld made the most of the privileged position he occupied in Iran (as shown by the trust placed in him by the Society). He skilfully used his status to emphasize the importance of preserving historical monuments and encouraging the role they played in shaping the identity of a nation. His opposition to the French Monopoly was, it seems, centred on Persepolis and the possibility of its excavation. Herzfeld had yearned to excavate there since the early

1920s, and it was with the prospect of working at Persepolis in mind that he eventually participated so energetically in the drafting of an antiquities law for the Iranian government.¹⁴ Persepolis offered a very promising site for fund raising. In this regard, as well as in intrinsic historical significance, it was an outstanding rival to Susa, which had been excavated by the French since the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ In his presentation, given in French, Herzfeld outlined the importance of the preservation of historical monuments, and their significance.¹⁶

Herzfeld was born on 23 July 1879 in Celle, lower Saxony, Germany. He studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule (later renamed the Technical University) in Berlin. He also took courses on Assyriology, art history, and philosophy at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin. In 1903, he began his participation in the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft as the field assistant of Walter Andrae at Assur in northern Mesopotamia. Later in Berlin Eduard Meyer introduced him to Friedrich Sarre, and their work together resulted in a monumental book on the rock-reliefs of ancient Iran, *Iranische Felsreliefs*, published in Berlin in 1910.¹⁷

12 Mousavi, "Ernst Herzfeld, politics and antiquities legislation in Iran", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 451. A. Godard and M. T. Mostafavi took over the task after 1930; the List of Historical Monuments has thenceforward been regularly updated.

13 Foroughi, "Moshâhedât va taffakorât darbâre-y-e athâr-e melli dar zemn-e safar-e Esfahân va Fârs", *Seh Khâtâbeh*, Mehr 1306 H.S. /October 1927, in *Majmu'eh Entehshârât-e Qadim-e Anjomn-e Âthâr-e Melli*, pp. 66-67. My translation).

14 Mousavi, "Ernst Herzfeld, politics and antiquities legislation in Iran", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 458.

15 Herzfeld often appears to have acted alone, while the diplomatic support for the French archaeologists is obvious. He was strongly backed, however, by German diplomats in Tehran and scholars in Germany (Boucharlat, "Ernst Herzfeld and French approaches", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 439). The French scholars working at Susa sought support in French diplomacy, and were never tempted to approach the governing elite of Persia. Thus, the work of the French mission was received with a general resentment in Iran. In the end, Persepolis became the focal point of an Iranian metaphor and grandeur versus Susa which was gradually converted into a symbol of the scientific activities and the political ambition of a Western power. This was partly due to the nature of these sites, one accessible with visible magnificent monuments, the other with heaps of mounds situated in an isolated and unfavourable location. This often played in favour of Persepolis and to the disadvantage of Susa. Even today, the glorious ruins of Persepolis proclaimed as a site of high national importance enjoy a particular care, whereas Susa has unfortunately been neglected in the past decades.

16 Herzfeld, "Fehrest-e mokhtasari az asâr va abniyey-e târikhiy-e Iran", *Majmu'eh Entehshârât-e Qadim-e Anjomn-e Asâr-e Melli*, pp. 43-44.

17 For a full biography of Herzfeld, see Hauser, "Herzfeld, Ernst: i. life and career", *Enclr*, vol. 12, pp. 290-293, from which the lines above have been extracted.

Herzfeld first visited Persepolis in November 1905, the records of which consist of two journals, photographs, sketchbooks, and numerous paper squeezes of the inscriptions. These documents are full of information not only on the site and its ruins, but also on Herzfeld's vivid personality, sense of humour, and romanticism. He recorded his first impression of the ruins as follows:¹⁸

The situation of the city, or the palaces, is glorious. The wide, starshaped valley, completely flat, and framed by bizarre ragged and highpiled mountains. To the north and northwest long valleys, at the ends of which appear the mountains of Khular and Ardekan. These high, blanketed with snow. The terrace itself, despite so few remains there, is wonderfully impressive. Almost more spectacular than some of the individual ruins at Palmyra

From 1926 to 1931, Herzfeld resided in Tehran. In 1929, he was invited to teach courses at the university in Tehran.¹⁹ In the span of a few years, he occupied various positions and became the most prominent figure in archaeology in Iran until he was forced to leave the country in 1934. The legacy of his various studies and their impact on Iranian archaeology is vast. He was an architect and draughtsman, a skilled archaeologist, an excellent epigraphist, and a devotee. He died in 1948 in Basel, Switzerland.

In 1923/24, Herzfeld made a trip to Persepolis, where he produced a careful plan of the site, and apparently took hundreds of photographs. He spent six weeks at Persepolis, working day and night. He had bought a supply of special Japanese paper to take squeezes of the inscriptions at the site but it was confiscated by the British customs when he landed in Bombay on his way to Iran. He used cigarette paper, and with the aid of two young Iranians, Javad and Jamal, he took squeezes of the inscription on the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam.²⁰ Then in March of 1924,

at the request of Firouz Mirza, the Qajar prince who was currently governor of Fars, Herzfeld returned to Persepolis in order to complete a report on the ruins. Herzfeld was uniquely qualified among archaeologists in Iran in the early 1920s to take on the task of excavating Persepolis.

In a letter written in French and dated 5 January 1924, Prince Firouz Mirza solicited Herzfeld's expertise in drawing up a detailed report on the state of preservation of the ruins. Firouz Mirza wrote that the Persian government desired to have a "detailed, scientific report concerning Persepolis", which would deal with the following questions:²¹

(1) L'état actuel de ces ruines et les précisions nécessaires concernant les divers bâtiments sur la terrasse et aux alentours.

(2) Des propositions pour la conservation et la préservation des pièces existantes.

(3) Des renseignements sur l'importance et la durée des travaux de déblaiement entrepris aux points intéressants ainsi que sur les découvertes possibles.

(4) Un plan général de l'emplacement des ruines à l'état actuel ainsi que l'essai de la reconstruction de la grande terrasse de Persépolis tel qu'elle a dû être.

C'est à votre bonne volonté que je fais appel au nom de mon gouvernement, pour accomplir ce travail. J'espère connaissant tout votre attachement aux souvenirs historiques et archéologiques de la Perse, que vous considérez l'acceptation de cette tâche comme un achèvement de vos intéressants travaux, car non seulement le gouvernement Persan connaîtra grâce à vous exactement et scientifiquement l'état actuel des ruines de la plus belle époque de son histoire; mais, il pourra peut-être à la lumière de vos renseignements prendre des mesures pour empêcher un plus grand délabrement à l'avenir, ou même la disparition totale de ces magnifiques souvenirs.

Inutile d'ajouter qu'en cas d'acceptation et connaissant l'objet principal de cette démarche, vous ne devez pas vous considérer lié ou limité aux précisions que j'ai apportées plus haut à titre d'indication sur la teneur de ce rapport et la méthode à suivre pour exécuter ce travail.

18 Written on 24 November 1905, Herzfeld Archive, Notebook-82, 8, published in Dusinberr, "Herzfeld in Persepolis", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 140.

19 Kröger, "Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Sarre", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 67.

20 Dusinberr, "Herzfeld in Persepolis", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 142.

21 Quoted in Herzfeld's report, *AMI* 1, pp. 17-18.

While engaged in this reconnaissance at Persepolis, Herzfeld received a visit of a group of Iranian elite and political leaders, including Prince Firouz Mirza.²² Herzfeld spoke to the prince about the possibility of conducting excavations. Apparently interested, the prince revealed that negotiations were in progress in Paris to abolish the French Monopoly. Then came the question of funding: “He [Firouz Mirza] asked how much it would cost. I said: 15 to 20,000 pounds, and I told him that I might get the Parsis of India interested in that”.²³ Later, with the support of Firouz Mirza, Herzfeld presented a proposal concerning possible excavations at Persepolis, without any claim of possession on any finds that might ensue. His proposal, including a full report of his survey at the site, was later published in French in the journal that he founded, *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, in 1929, which was the first academic journal specialized in the publication of archaeological studies on Iran. The article was translated into Persian by Mojtaba Minovi, and was published in the same volume. In order to satisfy any potential donating organization, Herzfeld proposed that permission should be granted also to excavate at Istakhr, the finds from which would be divided between the donor and the Iranian government. This particular proposition, so dependent upon the good auspices of the governor of Fars, never came to pass. Firouz Mirza was arrested following a “plot of high officials against him during the insurrections in Fars and Isfahan”.²⁴

In the spring of 1928, in the aftermath of the abolition of the French Monopoly, Herzfeld organized an expedition under the auspices of the *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen*

Wissenschaft for excavating at Pasargadae with the assistance of Friedrich Krefter, a young German architect. Herzfeld had a long scholarly interest in Pasargadae, a site that was the subject of his doctoral dissertation, published in 1908.²⁵ In the same year, they spent time together at Persepolis, with Krefter making photographs of the site (fig. 8.2) – foreshadowing a successful collaboration there a few years later.

Meanwhile, Herzfeld’s expedition to Pasargadae was the first fieldwork undertaken in Iran after the abolition of the Monopoly. It was the only excavation in Iran carried out in the absence of a law for the protection of antiquities.²⁶ This shows the esteem in which Herzfeld was held at the time among the Iranian leadership—despite the fact that his relations with many westerners working in Iran were very strained. But Pasargadae was one thing; Persepolis was another. In the absence of any concrete legislation to protect Iranian interests, any excavation of the ruins at Persepolis could not be undertaken. Herzfeld’s first task was, thus, to convince the Iranian government to accept and approve a law regulating excavation procedure in general, and then to apply such a law to the site of Persepolis. It was Herzfeld who drafted the first excavation law (the *Loi sur les fouilles*) presented to the Court Minister on 10 October 1929.²⁷

The excavation of Persepolis was a subject of high delicacy for the Iranian government. It is why in response to Herzfeld’s inquiry, Teymourash, the Court Minister, said: “justified or unjustified, there is a national sensibility that needs to be taken into account, and thus, it must look as if the government would do the job”. Later, Teymourash opposed Herzfeld’s excavation proposal which included the

22 Herzfeld, “Reisebericht”, *ZDMG* 80, p. 247.

23 Herzfeld Archive, notebook 84 [Persien II, 1923-24], series 2, p. 30.

24 Herzfeld Archive, Herzfeld to Schmidt-Ott, 1 Nov. 1929, p. 1.

25 Herzfeld, “Pasargade. Untersuchungen zur persischen Archäologie”, *Klio* 8, pp. 1-68. For a reassessment of his work at Pasargadae, see Stronach, “Ernst Herzfeld and Pasargadae”, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, pp. 103-136.

26 Mousavi, “Ernst Herzfeld, politics and antiquities legislation in Iran”, *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 459.

27 The original text in French has been published in *Documents on Archaeology*, pp. 474-75.



FIG. 8.2 View of Persepolis taken by Friedrich Krefter in 1928 while accompanying Ernst Herzfeld on a reconnaissance visit before the commencement of their excavations (Photo: H. Krefter).

division of finds because he believed that “assimilating the excavation with the division of finds was a devaluation of a very idealistic enterprise to a deal in which both parties would be betrayed.” In a tour de force of arguments, the details of which have been recorded in one of Herzfeld’s letters, he defended the idea of the division of finds: “I told him that he should know about the economic situation of the world well enough for not to believe that such a great amount of money could not be spent without expecting any kind of compensation, and also the donator had personal interests, and that the division of finds would not be a business at all; the donator wished to receive material for scientific purposes. I reminded him of the fact that there could not be

an interest in Persian art if foreign museums did not possess Persian art objects, and that knowledge in that field might not be developed, and so on. He seemed to be slightly appeased but maintained his point of view that such an exchange was impossible...” Being firm in his opposition to the division of finds, the Court Minister finally accepted to present to the parliament a draft of the law for antiquities.²⁸

The development of archaeology in Iran took a decisive turn when the Act for the Antiquities of Iran (the Antiquities Law), prepared ultimately under the supervision of the French architect, André Godard (serving as the Director of the newly founded General Department of Archaeology in Iran), as well as Herzfeld

28 Herzfeld to Schmidt-Ott, 1 Nov. 1929, p. 3.

(acting as the archaeological advisor to the government), was finally approved on 3 November 1930.

After the removal of the French Monopoly, other nationals became interested in working in Iran. In consequence, Herzfeld found himself in rivalry with other colleagues, amongst them Arthur Upham Pope was undoubtedly the most challenging one.²⁹ Because of Pope's presence and his meddling in archaeological matters, Herzfeld had to step up not only the procedure of the passage of the Antiquities Law, but also the one that would authorize him to dig at Persepolis. The cost of excavating at Persepolis was very high, and no European country seemed to be able to raise the necessary funds for digging there. Herzfeld, however, attempted to have his German institution interested in it. On this, he wrote to Dr. Schmidt-Ott: "In the past few weeks especially, I had pushed the case of Persepolis more energetically because Mr. Pope had started to meddle. I have not yet figured him out. The one thing that is for sure is that he is not a person of real influence, and that he is trying with great effort to establish himself as a kind of scholarly broker between all American missions and Persia".³⁰ Apparently, Pope was trying to propagate the news about the excavation at Persepolis with the intention to get other countries interested in it, and consequently to take the site out of Herzfeld's control. At this point Herzfeld felt that it was time to get in touch with the Americans. The beginning of American participation in Iranian ar-

chaeology falls in a period of rivalry between the University Museum of Pennsylvania and the Oriental Institute of Chicago. Herzfeld began to contact first the Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, asking them to provide him with James H. Breasted's (1865-1935) address. Breasted and Herzfeld had known each other since 1928.³¹ Later, they met again in Oxford, where Herzfeld mentioned his desire to excavate at Persepolis. The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania sent a cable to Herzfeld offering him the directorship of the Philadelphia Expedition at Persepolis for a period of four years with an annual budget of 20,000. Horace Jayne, the director of the same museum, also authorized Pope to "take any further steps to clinch arrangements".³² In turn, Pope sent a telegram to Herzfeld encouraging him to "discuss personally in full detail" the proposal. Later, in Iran, it turned out that Pope, having a tense relationship with Herzfeld, was trying to challenge him. In consequence, Williamson, the American chargé d'affaires in Tehran, sent a cable to Jayne: "Due to personal differences Pope's meddling jeopardizes Herzfeld's participation. Please advise former that you and I are handling affairs directly".³³ Jayne immediately asked Pope to suspend his intervention.

Herzfeld had to give up finally the idea of German participation under the auspices of the *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft*.³⁴ It seems that he was looking for the most credible of the American institutions, and his ultimate choice fell upon the Oriental

29 Hauser and Gunter, "Introduction", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 18, note 41. Pope first came to Iran in 1925, and in the following year organized an exhibition of Iranian art in Philadelphia. In 1928, he founded the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology in New York. He gradually gained a network of influential friends both in Iran and in the West, mainly for the purposes of his antiquities business. Pope's career was a double-faced one of an infamous antiquities dealer and an eminent scholar of Iranian art (see Muscarella's revealing article, "Pope and the Bitter Fanatic", *The Iranian World: Essays on Iranian Art and Archaeology Presented to Ezat O. Negahban*, pp. 5-12.

30 Herzfeld to Schmidt-Ott, 1 Nov. 1929, p. 5.

31 Hauser and Gunter, "Introduction", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 18.

32 Letter from H. Jayne to A. U. Pope, 8 October 8, 1929, published in Gluck and Siver, *Surveyors of Persian Art: a documentary bibliography of Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman*, p. 216.

33 Gluck and Siver, *Surveyors of Persian Art: a documentary bibliography of Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman*, p. 217.

34 Kröger, "Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Sarre", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 76; Hauser, "History, race, and Orientalism", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near*

Institute of the University of Chicago. Just after the passage of the Law, Herzfeld sent a telegram to Breasted, director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, urging American action, and Breasted replied positively to Herzfeld at once. Subsequently Herzfeld asked permission to dig at Persepolis. This extraordinary authorization was awarded to him by the unanimous vote of the Persian parliament on 16 December 1930. It was the first excavation permit under the new Antiquities Law.

In 1931, Herzfeld was finally able to begin excavating at Persepolis, sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, with the financial support of Ada Small Moore (1859-1955). Mrs. Moore was a wealthy benefactress interested in archaeological activities in Iran (fig. 8.3), whom Robert Byron (1905-1941), the famous English writer/traveller, with a caustic irreverent wit, described as "...a matriarch in shawl, more than seventy years old and worth as many millions."³⁵ It was thus that a large-scale project of controlled excavation at Persepolis was launched.

Recent research on unpublished documents and antiquities papers both in the United States and Iran indicate that the Persian government did *not* grant a permission to Herzfeld and the Oriental Institute for an excavation as such.³⁶ What it did grant was a "clearance permission" for promoting restoration and preservation of the ruins. It seems that, originally, excavation of the site was not seen as an end in itself. In an official letter to the Iranian ambassador in Paris, Teymourtash (the Court Minister), clearly indicated that "no excavation permit was given to foreign institutions," and that the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, through Herzfeld,

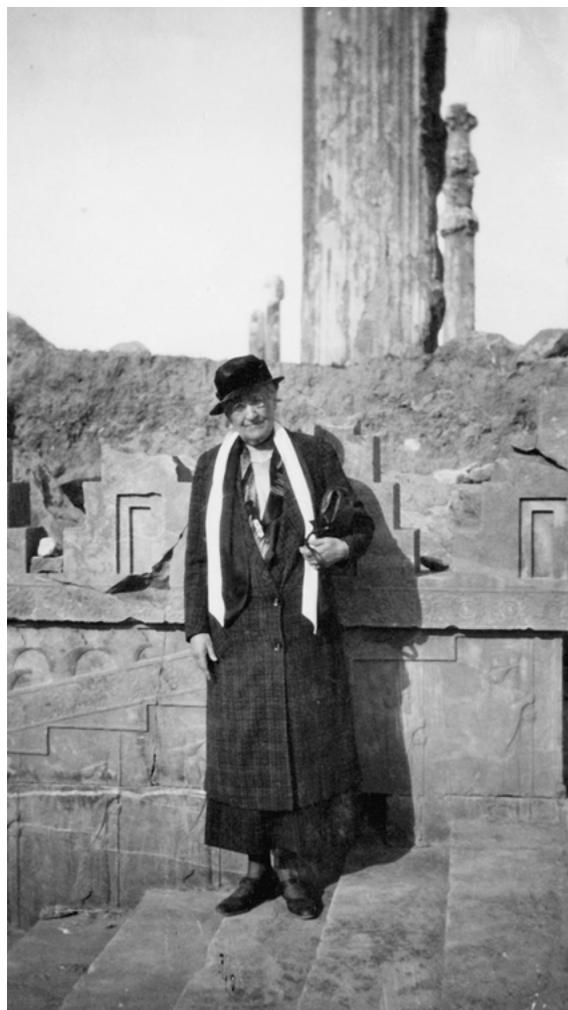


FIG. 8.3 Ada Small Moore standing before the staircase of the Apadana at Persepolis. From Mostafavi's album of Persepolis dated November 1933 (Photo © the Iran Bastan Museum).

"submitted a proposal merely for the preservation of historical monuments at Persepolis, which was then approved by the government that released an authorization; the permit had nothing to do with an excavation process".³⁷ Moreover, the government was reluctant to

Eastern Studies 1900-1950, p. 521 (for the budgetary cuts for the Notgemeinschaft resulting from the economic crisis in Germany).

35 Byron, "Middle Eastern Journey II", *Times* (London), p. 15.

36 For a general account of the Oriental Institute's activities in Iran, see Stolper, "The Persian Expedition: the past and present of the Oriental Institute's early work in Iran", forthcoming.

37 Mousavi, "Ernst Herzfeld, politics and antiquities legislation in Iran", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 465. This was a response to the Iranian ambassador in Paris who had apparently transferred complaints made by Pope and the French government as well. Letter dated 11 Bahman

authorize a foreign institution actually to dig at such an important and symbolic site. It is not clear how the initial work of preservation and restoration was subsequently transformed into a real archaeological excavation. In his first and only comprehensive report, Herzfeld estimated the amount and length of the work at Persepolis and in so doing gives some sense of what he envisioned as the nature of the enterprise:³⁸

Le travail à exécuter est approximativement pour la terrasse entière, le mouvement de 210,000 m cubiques de terre.

Ce travail peut être exécuté à l'aide d'un petit chemin de fer Décoville [*sic*] sans que les haldes de décombres déforment l'aspect et gâtent l'impression incomparable de la terrasse. Avec un Décoville de 12 chars et avec 240 ouvriers on est à même d'accomplir ce travail en 300 journées de travail à 10 heures. Les frais n'en surpasseraient pas 30,000 tomans. Les travaux nécessaires pour mouvoir les grandes pierres demandaient approximativement la moitié de cette somme et de ce temps, et les travaux pour construire le système de drainage et pour couvrir les pierres d'une couche protectrice de ciment, requérissons encore une fois la même somme et le même temps. Ainsi au cours de deux années j'estime qu'on pourrait accomplir tous les travaux nécessaires.

He subsequently revised his cost estimate upward to a total of 100,000 tomans (approximately £ 6500 in the late 1920s), and stated in a letter to the Court Minister in Tehran that he was convinced he would be able to raise the necessary funds if the Persian government would grant its support to the realization of the project.³⁹ The insecurity of the site was an obstacle to the beginning of excavations, but in the winter of 1929, a police headquarters was established at Persepolis.⁴⁰

The work required a large quantity of materials, technical devices and machinery. A series

of Decauville rails and wagons were purchased in Germany; the machinery for lifting heavy blocks was bought in the United States, and water tanks were imported from Basra and Egypt. All this disembarked in Bushehr in the winter of 1931.⁴¹

The Persepolis expedition seems to have been intended by Herzfeld to pursue a triple aim: 1. Examination by excavation (clearing) of the principal palatial complexes of the Terrace; 2. Reconstruction of one of the palaces for housing the expedition; 3. Preservation of buildings and sculptures of the Terrace, to "be effected by reopening the ancient subterranean drainage system, and protection against damage by rain, frost, and man".⁴² The government's vision of preservation as the main goal of the entire project gradually gave way to different agendas. "Preservation" came to be synonymous with the establishment of a physical protection for the Takht by employing guards to control access to the site. But most of the excavated remains in mud-brick received very little conservation treatment. The vast area of the Takht, exposed to natural and human destructive factors for so long, has remained a major issue in archaeological preservation, a problem which was certainly not dealt with in any systematic way during the Chicago expedition.

American institutions depended on Europe to supply them with experts. Breasted, the founder and director of the Oriental Institute, introduced a new model of organization for archaeological missions. While in Europe, archaeologists and other experts (like topographers, draftsmen or photographers) were hired for the duration of the fieldwork season; Breasted hired them for the whole year, and this guaranteed that the entire staff would re-

1309/31 January 1931, archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published in Karimlou, *Tārāj-e mirās-e melli*, vol. 2, p. 158.

38 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis", *AMI* 1, pp. 37-38.

39 Bāyeganiy-e Rāked, letter dated to 23 January 1931.

40 The region was often the scene of conflicts between the tribes of Fars and the governmental forces; these rebellions were finally subdued in the early years of Reza Shah's reign.

41 Herzfeld's letter to the Court Minister, 23 January 1931 (Bāyeganiy-e Rāked, archives of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, Tehran).

42 Herzfeld, "The magnificent discovery' at Persepolis", *ILN*, 25 March, 1933, pp. 406-407.

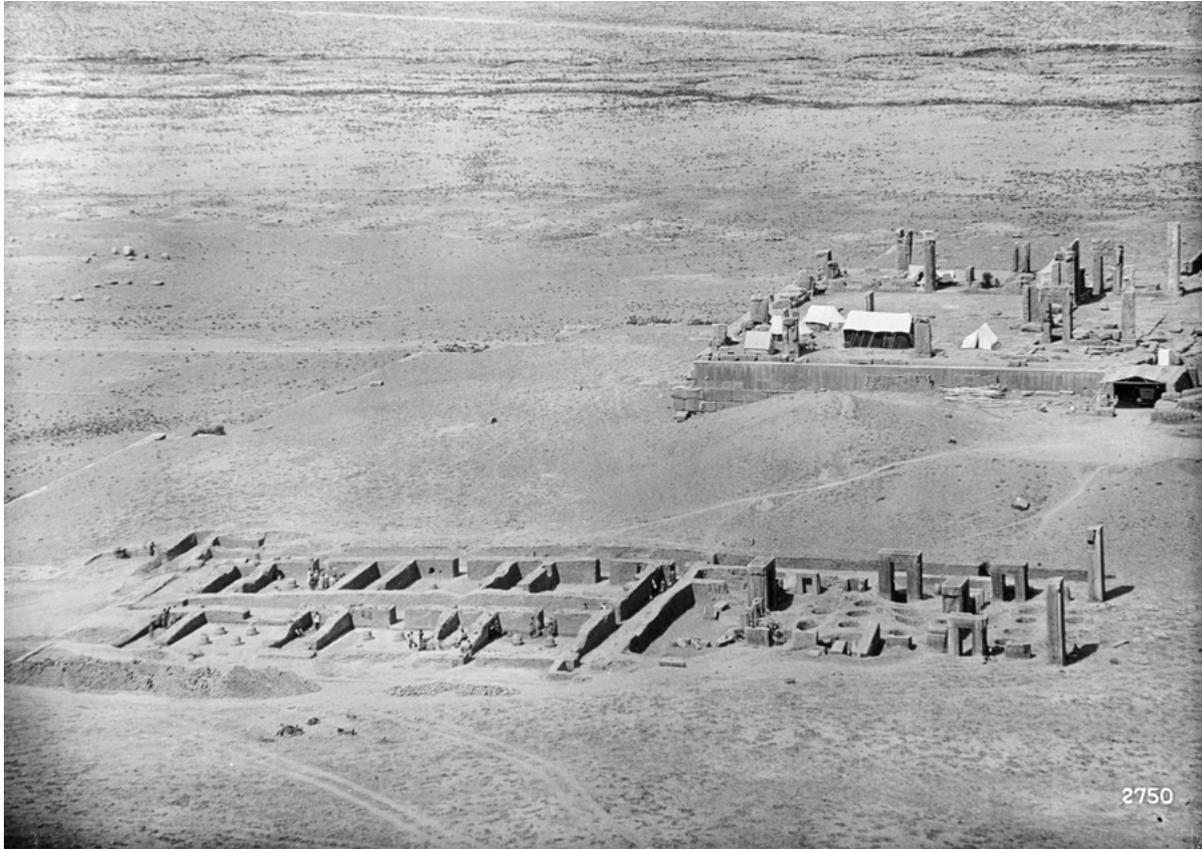


FIG. 8.4 The so-called Harem of Xerxes before reconstruction in the foreground, and the tents of the Oriental Institute team set up in the main hall of the Hadish in the background (Photo © Ernst Herzfeld Papers, the Archives of the Freer and Sackler, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.).

turn year after year, providing continuity. In the off-season they would get together in Chicago for the study of their finds, and to work on their publications, giving lectures and preparing for the next season. Herzfeld's staff was nearly exclusively (with one exception for one season only) of Germans: Friedrich Krefter, the architect who had accompanied him to Pasargadae and Persepolis in 1928, who was also the field director of the mission, Karl Bergner as a second architect and draughtsman, the German Alexander Langsdorff and the American Donald McCown as field assistants for the excavation of the prehistoric mounds in the plain of Marvdasht, and Hans-Wichart von Busse, a former student of Adolf Miethé, as photographer.

Of these, Krefter stood out because of his position as the field director of the mission and his significant contribution to the architectural study of the site. He had been introduced to Herzfeld in February 1925 in Berlin as a skilful draughtsman and architect whose job was to assist the eminent German scholar in his topographic surveys of Iranian sites in Fars, in particular Pasargadae and Persepolis.⁴³ Herzfeld knew the abilities of Iraqi excavation workers from his Mesopotamian years with Andrae. He brought three veteran foremen from the region of Hillah who had worked in the excavations at nearby Babylon. Their participation in the excavations at Persepolis soon proved to be invaluable. It was how he formed three teams of workers to

43 Krefter, "Mit Ernst Herzfeld in Pasargadae und Persepolis 1928 und 1931–1934", *AMI* 12, p. 13.



FIG. 8.5 The Harem of Xerxes during the reconstruction in 1931 (Photo: H. Krefter).

work on the building named the Harem of Xerxes, the excavation of which appeared most urgent to him, the north sector of the Apadana and Palace ‘G’, and the eastern part of the Gate of All Lands.

Herzfeld did not produce a survey grid in which the location of finds could be marked. He knew the whole site extremely well, and had measured its structures twice. According to Krefter, producing a survey would have required countless fixed points, a task that, at the moment, seemed quite unnecessary and time-consuming. His main objective was to go on faster with his excavations. This is why he declined to establish a survey grid for the excavations; the task was carefully undertaken later by Schmidt.⁴⁴ In fact, Herzfeld saw his

excavations as a means of clearance of architectural remains, and the recovery of small and unexceptional finds was of no interest to him. This is also why the exact location of most of the finds during Herzfeld’s excavations remains unclear.

In his 1924 report, Herzfeld expressed his idea for the reconstruction of one of the buildings which would serve as a museum.⁴⁵ Initially, Herzfeld had intended to reconstruct the Palace of Darius (Tachara) to serve as the expedition house.⁴⁶ This small building posed a number of technical problems. The ruined hypostyle portico would have needed much to rebuild. The lower parts, including the foundations, would have had to have been consolidated, and the rebuilt area would have not

44 Krefter, “Mit Ernst Herzfeld in Pasargadae und Persepolis 1928 und 1931–1934”, *AMI* 12, p. 18.

45 Herzfeld, “Rapport sur l’état actuel des ruines de Persépolis”, *AMI* 1, p. 38.

46 Bāyeganiy-e Rāked, letter to the Court Minister dated 23 January 1931.



FIG. 8.6 The northern portico of the Harem after reconstruction.

been enough to house the members of the excavation team and all the equipment. On the advice of Krefter, this idea was soon abandoned. As Krefter wrote, the building known as the Harem was larger, and its northern portico was in a good state of preservation. The northern hall could easily be configured as a museum, while the smaller rooms located in the southern part of the building offered the necessary space to house the expedition staff and equipment. Besides, by virtue of its peripheral location, the Harem could be easily reached from the south-eastern corner of the Terrace; such access would have been impossible for the Palace of Darius. A major challenge in modifying any structure on the Takht to serve modern needs was the importance of not disrupting the aesthetics of the site as a

whole. The Harem (fig. 8.4) was well suited to meeting this need, since its location, on a low level compared to the other buildings on the Takht, would make it less obtrusive in an altered form.⁴⁷ The first season of work was thus spent in excavating the main part of the so-called Harem of Xerxes and in its partial reconstruction (figs. 8.5-8.6). This task, undertaken by Krefter, was completed by the end of 1932. Robert Byron, who visited Persepolis a year later, sarcastically described it as “a palace, reconstructed of wood on the site, and in the style of its Achaemenid predecessor, whose stone door and window frames are incorporated in it, ... the outcome is a luxurious cross between the King David Hotel in Jerusalem and the Pergamum Museum in Berlin”.⁴⁸

47 Krefter, “Mit Ernst Herzfeld in Pasargadae und Persepolis 1928 und 1931–1934”, *AMI* 12, pp. 20-22.

48 Byron, *The Road to Oxiana*, p. 184. See also Tuplin’s article, “Modern and ancient travellers in the Achaemenid empire: Byron’s *Road to Oxiana* and Xenophon’s *Anabasis*”, *AchHist* VII, pp. 37-57.



FIG. 8.7 The excavation of the eastern staircase of the Apadana, 1932. From Mostafavi's album of Persepolis dated November 1933 (Photo © the Iran Bastan Museum).

In 1932, Herzfeld excavated the major portion of the Gate of All Lands (the Gate of Xerxes) and the system of subterranean canals. In addition, the outline of Palace 'G' was defined, and part of the western wing of the Harem and the southern stairway of the Central Building (the Council Hall or Tripylon) was uncovered.⁴⁹ The most remarkable task of the 1932 season was the excavation of the large avenue to the north of the Central Building, between the Hall of a Hundred Columns and the Apadana. This work resulted in the important discovery of the sculptured stairways of both the northern façade of the Tripylon and the eastern façade of the Apadana

(fig. 8.7). Because the east stairway façade of the Apadana had been long-buried, its reliefs were better preserved in contrast to the much damaged and pilfered reliefs of the north stairway façade. The comparisons are readily appreciated in the photographs produced by Schmidt. In the same season, Herzfeld's team uncovered the Post-Achaemenid building of the Fratadara, 300 m. to the west/north-west of the Terrace, revealing re-used structural material from the Takht as well as doorjamb sculptures carved in emulation of the earlier Achaemenid forms visible at Persepolis. A stone platform called Takht-e Rustam, situated halfway between Persepolis and Naqsh-e

49 The stairway was later transferred from its original place to the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran.



FIG. 8.8 Herzfeld with members of his team and guests at the time of the visit of Reza Shah, in the northern portico of the Harem, 28 October 1932. Left to right: Alexander Langsdorff and his wife, Joseph Upton, Lotte Bradford (Herzfeld's sister) and her son Charles, Ernst Herzfeld, Friedrich Krefter, Hans Kühler (technician of the expedition), Muhammad-Taqi Mostafavi, and André Godard. From Mostafavi's album of Persepolis dated November 1933 (Photo © the Iran Bastan Museum).

Rustam, was also investigated. Finally, the vast site of Istakhr was tested.⁵⁰

In 1933, the courtyard between the Hall of a Hundred Columns and the Apadana was cleared. Small trenches resulted in the discovery of the heads of the bulls flanking the entrance of the Hall of a Hundred Columns; to the east of this building, the excavators found a stairway leading to the subterranean canal system. While levelling debris for construction of a roadway for the removal of excavation debris in the spring of that year, Herzfeld discovered an archive of some 30,000 inscribed and sealed clay tablets and sealed clay labels

in rooms of the north-eastern fortifications (the so-called Persepolis Fortification tablets). He thought the findspot was an archival room, and estimated that the finds included about 30,000 or more inscribed and sealed clay tablets and fragments.⁵¹

Only a small proportion of these archives is preserved, and yet they still number about 30,000 clay tablets, written, with exception of about 500 Aramaic and 1 Phrygian piece, in Elamite cuneiform. Probably the garrison was a Susian regiment of the 'immortals'.

The discovery has emerged as one of extraordinary significance. The documents record

50 Herzfeld briefly reported on the results of his soundings at Istakhr in Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 276.

51 Herzfeld, *IAE*, p. 226.



FIG. 8.9 Herzfeld leaving for Germany, 1933. From Hans-Wichart von Busse's private album (Photo: The Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

food disbursements relating to work and travel in Persepolis; they contain information on the administration, centred on Persepolis, of the surrounding region. Bearing dates between 509 and 494 B.C., the texts inform issues of chronology at the site as well as a myriad of other social matters. Herzfeld never published a report on the circumstances in which the tablets were found. The tablets were not cleaned and studied at the site. Herzfeld asked for information from the chemical laboratories at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin on how to ensure the preservation of the tablets. They were finally impregnated with paraffin, and were subsequently packed in 2,535 numbered boxes to be shipped to Chicago.⁵² A full reassessment of the Fortification archive and their dis-

covery by Mark Garrison and Margaret Cool Root shows the lack of precision and haste with which the tablets in the north-east bastion were excavated and documented.⁵³

Although Herzfeld was primarily interested in the structures on the Terrace, he did conduct soundings on the Southern plain and discovered a palatial complex there (see above, chapter I). Like his discovery of the Fortification tablets, his work in the plain laid the basis for important efforts later in the history of excavation and interpretation of the ancient city. It is a pity that he never published a report on his excavation in the Southern plain. The soundings at Istakhr were abandoned in the winter of 1932/33. Attention was directed instead to Naqsh-e Rostam, where Herzfeld

52 For a detailed history of the discovery, see Dusinberr, "Herzfeld in Persepolis", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, pp. 151-158.

53 Garrison and Root, *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, vol. 1, pp. 23-29.



FIG. 8.10 The Apadana, findspot of the north-eastern deposit. Mostafavi is sitting outside at the left corner of the trench, looking directly at the camera; the two Arab excavation foremen Herzfeld had brought from Samarra are standing in front of him inside the trench, while Krefter is visible inside the trench at the far right wearing the German hat (Photo © the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).



FIG. 8.11 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

traced the outer enclosure of the site, and copied the inscription on the tomb of Darius I. In October 1932, Reza Shah visited Persepolis for the second time. Herzfeld and Godard were present to welcome the king, and at the same time, Breasted, on behalf of the Oriental Institute, sent a telegram to welcome the arrival of Reza Shah at Persepolis. The king stayed for lunch, and visited the excavations in the afternoon. Herzfeld guided then on a comprehensive tour of the monuments and his recent discoveries (fig. 8.8). During his visit to the so-called Harem of Xerxes, the king inquired of Herzfeld when the reconstruction would be finished. The German archaeologist replied that it should be complete in three

months. The king said: “Have this hall ready when I come back to Persepolis next time.”⁵⁴ Reza Shah was so pleased with his visit that at the end he said to Herzfeld: “You are doing a work of civilization here, and I thank you”.⁵⁵

The season of 1933 is marked with a decline of activity on the Terrace, but it is also remembered for the most amazing discovery at Persepolis. In the absence of Herzfeld (fig. 8.9), who was on leave for a trip back to Europe, Krefter took over the excavations at the site, and his architectural training and sharp sense of terrain led him to one of the most fascinating archaeological discoveries ever made in Iran. The story of the discovery of the Persepolis Foundation tablets has fortu-

54 The visit was recorded by Mostafavi, “Amānatdāriy-e khāk”, *BT* 11, pp. 10-13.

55 Breasted, “Exploring the Secrets of Persepolis”, *The National Geographic Magazine* 63/4, p. 384. The newspaper *Ettela’at* also gave a detailed account of the visit (Afsar and Mousavi, *Pāsdāri az Asār-e Bāstān dar Asr-e Pahlavi*, pp. 90-93).

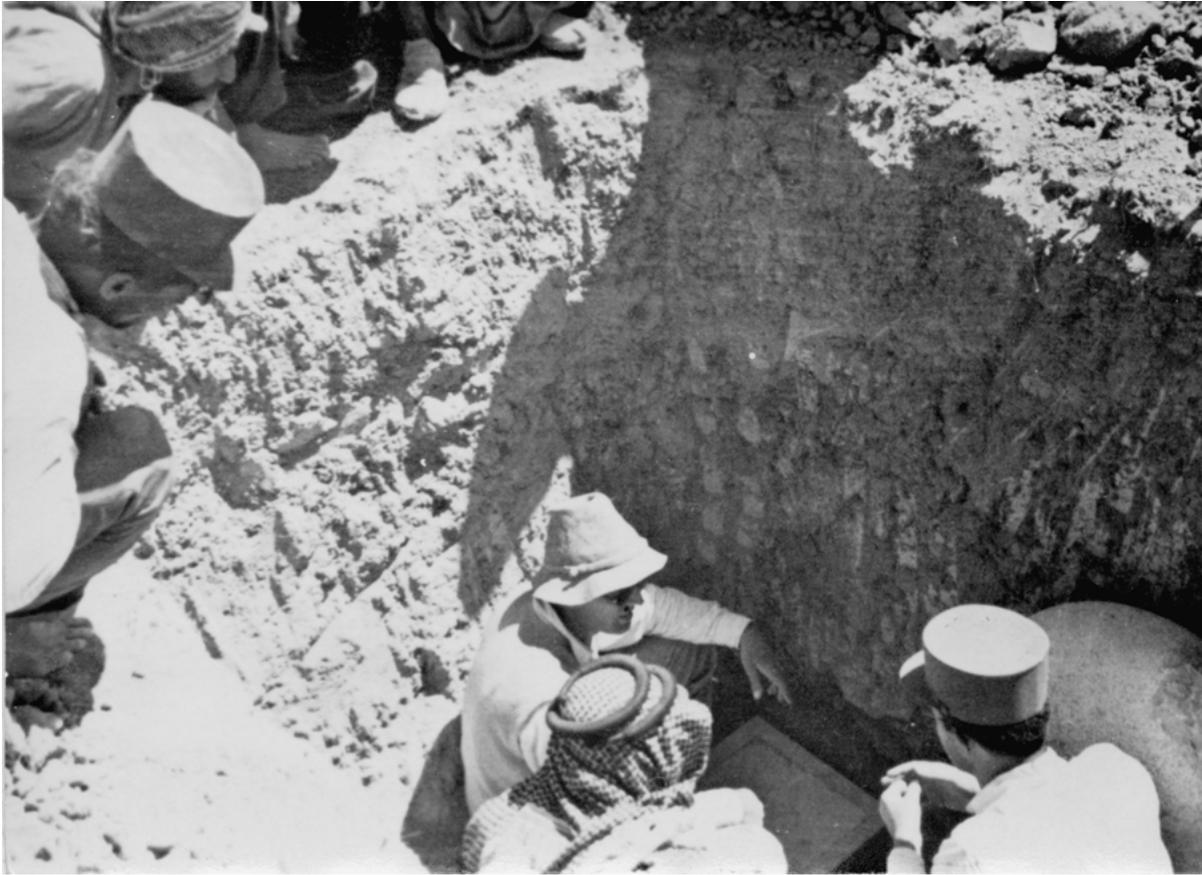


FIG. 8.12 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

nately been recorded by two witnesses: Muhammad-Taqi Mostafavi, the representative of the Iranian government, and Hans-Wichart von Busse, the photographer of the Persepolis expedition, who were both present at the time of the discovery (figs. 8.10-8.19, pl. 12). Mostafavi gives us a first-hand description of how Krefter came about the idea of excavating the corners of the Apadana:⁵⁶

In September of that year, when Professor Herzfeld was absent, and the excavations at Persepolis had been frozen because of financial difficulties, there were a few Arab foremen from Samarra employed full time by the expedition that had to pay them whether or not there was work to do. Professor Krefter, the engineer and architect of the expedition at Persepolis, who was generally in charge of executive tasks, took advantage of such an opportunity to find out what had been intriguing him for a long

time. Professor Krefter had already noticed that in the north-western angle of the central hall of the Apadana, there was a small square hole of about half a meter with a depth of 15 cm. . . . Contemplating various hypotheses, he thought that it might have contained some inscribed documents. On September 18, 1933, in order to test that hypothesis, he made careful observations of the opposite spot at the north-eastern angle of the main hall of the Apadana, where an elevation of about one meter above floor level could be seen. . . . On the same day and on the order of Professor Krefter, the above-mentioned foremen began to dig a 1.5 m trench at that spot. Since they were very skillful, they soon realized that what they were digging was a mud-brick wall, which should not be destroyed. So they stopped the work and went back to Professor Krefter informing him that the spot he had ordered dug was a wall, the mud-bricks of which would be destroyed in the course of excavation. Professor Krefter told them: "I am glad it is mud-brick! This shows that the lower part of the original wall of the

56 Mostafavi, "Amānatdāriy-e khāk", *BT* 11, pp. 70-76, translation from the Persian by A. Mousavi).



FIG. 8.13 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

main hall is still in place there. Continue to dig, and if during the excavation, you come across something, leave it in place and call me". The foremen did as Professor Krefter told them, and two hours later, at a depth of 70/80 cm they found a stone slab approximately $5 \times 55 \times 40$ cm, which had been placed within the mud-bricks. They called Professor Krefter, who, after having examined and photographed the slab, had it removed. Under the slab, there was a beautiful square stone box of $45 \times 45 \times 4$ cm, which had been partly broken under the pressure of the slab. So, they were able to remove easily the fragmentary stone lid of the box ($35.5 \times 35.5 \times 4$ cm). At that moment, in a space ($33 \times 33 \times 1.5$ cm) inside the box, there were a gold and a silver tablet . . . The silver tablet had been placed on the gold tablet face to face so that the inscriptions did not touch the rough surface of the box.

Mostafavi adds in a separate article that the excavation of that sector of the Apadana revealed three recent graves, which probably belonged to nomads or visitors buried in the past two to three hundred years. The last one of those graves was only a metre away from the position where the tablets were discovered; had they dug a fourth tomb, the grave diggers would have certainly hit the stone box and its tablets.⁵⁷ Von Busse gave an account in a letter to his father on the circumstances that favoured the discovery of the tablets:⁵⁸

There were various circumstances involved in the discovery of the gold tablets which made it appear to be advisable to undertake the work right at this

57 Mostafavi, "Lohnebeshtehāy-e simin va zarrin az shāhanshāhān-e hakhāmaneshi," *Naqsh-o Negar* 8, p. 73.

58 Von Busse's letter to his father, undated, Logbook and correspondence, the English translation (the collection of Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel).



FIG. 8.14 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

point in time. Above all, we wanted to avoid prematurely letting the cat of the bag, so the timing of the European trip of the leader of the expedition, during which the excavation activities in general were interrupted, was particularly well suited; along with that, naturally, such an important project is best carried out when it is calm, rather than if workers are swarming about – every day each one of us is confronted with far too many demands of the most varied nature.

It was not until the 23rd of September that von Busse learned about Krefter's plan:⁵⁹

Monday morning, on my way through the dig, with the intention of preparing a few photographs, I met Krefter in front of the great main Gate [Gate of All

Lands], working on his oil painting. I noticed, however, that he wasn't really concentrating on it. He said casually that I should keep my camera ready for there could be possibly soon a tablet to be photographed which he had the Arabs been digging for. In response to my comment that one should wait for the most favourable position of the sun, he came out with the statement that it could possibly be a gold tablet, which would have to be immediately spirited away from here.

Von Busse took a series of pictures of the progress of the excavations, of which he sent a few to Chicago, and kept a large number for his private album. On the day of the discovery, in another letter to his father he wrote:⁶⁰

59 Von Busse's letter to his father, September 23, 1933, Logbook and correspondence, the English translation (the collection of Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel).

60 Von Busse's letter to his father, 23 September 1933, Logbook and correspondence, p. 1 (the collection of Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel).



FIG. 8.15 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

Yesterday we sent a thick report with photos to Chicago. Along with that we had made so to speak casts of the first two tablets; to accomplish this, one takes enough large sheets of extremely thin cigarette paper that while damp, is carefully hammered on with a hard brush. When it is well moulded to the form, new layers are progressively overlaid, until the whole has a certain stability. Once it is dry one can lift off the paper layers, which are now firmly stuck together, and one has an exact – albeit negative – reproduction of the original. This impression is far easier to photograph than the mirror-like original.

Krefter himself remembered the excitement some sixty years later when he told the story to his grandchildren about the events of the 18th and 19th of September, 1933:⁶¹

In August of 1933, the workers at the excavation site were on strike because their wages were continuously decreasing with the drop in the value of the U.S. dollar. I was forced to let many of them go. There was a strained atmosphere at the terrace of Persepolis. Discovery of the first two foundation tablets on September 18 was not only an archaeological sensation, but also a considerable cash value. The news of the finding spread like the wind. How could I keep the gold, silver, myself, and most importantly, the 2500-years-old Achaemenid inscriptions safe until morning time when we could safely deliver them to the Imperial Bank at Shiraz? I put them under the mattress on my cot and laid down in full gear — holding my hunting rifle on my chest with my faithful dog, Toi, sleeping bound to the post of the cot. I could hardly sleep – laying 10 cm above these 2500-years-old documents which I had

61 Dr. Heiko Krefter, 3 Oct. 2006, in his father's memory, (published at http://www.persepolis3d.com/data_krefter/excavation.htm).

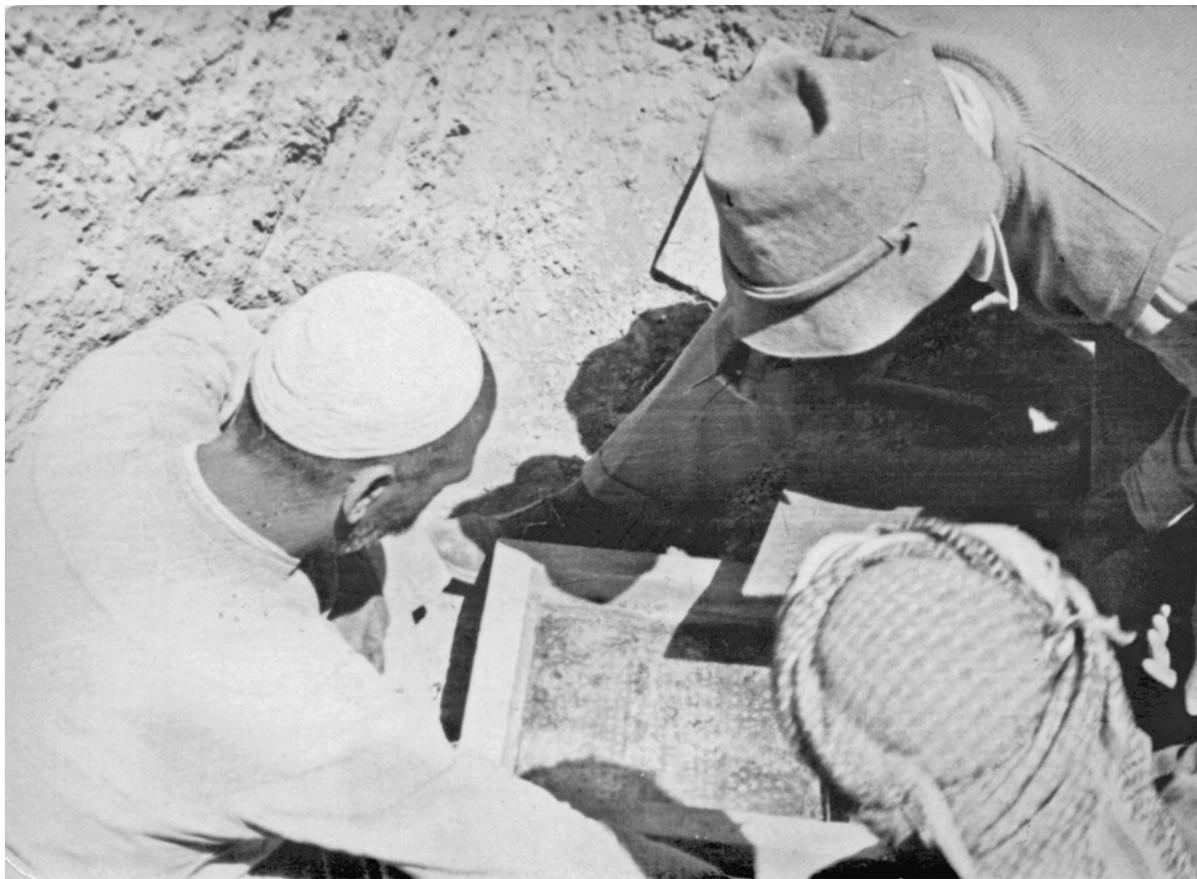


FIG. 8.16 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

carried out a few hours ago into the daylight and which were probably last touched 2500-years-ago by Darius, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of the Lands, with his own hands.

Two pairs of tablets were finally discovered. The cuneiform text of the tablets was hastily translated by the members of the mission, revealing the name of Darius the Great. Krefter deposited the tablets in the bank in Shiraz with the view that one of the pairs would be the share of the Oriental Institute. Robert Byron, who met Krefter in Tehran a few weeks after the discovery wrote:⁶²

At the English club we found Krefter, Herzfeld's assistant at Persepolis, deep in conversation with Wadsworth, the American First Secretary. Their se-

cret, which both were too excited to contain, was that in Herzfeld's absence abroad, Krefter had dug up a number of gold and silver plaques which record the foundation of Persepolis by Darius. He calculated their positions by abstract mathematics; and there they lay, in stone boxes, when the holes were dug. Rather unwillingly he showed us photographs of them; archaeological jealousy and suspicion glanced from his eyes. Herzfeld, it seems, has turned Persepolis into his private domain, and forbids anyone to photograph there.

The discovery of the gold and silver tablets gradually became quite an affair. The Iranian government insisted on taking possession of them, while Krefter could not release the objects before Herzfeld's return.⁶³ According to the Antiquities Law of Iran, a pair of these ta-

62 Byron, *Road to Oxiana*, London, 1937, p. 44.

63 Von Busse's letter to his father, September 30, 1933, Logbook and correspondence, p. 1 (The collection of Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel).



FIG. 8.17 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

blents would have been given to the Oriental Institute, but as the news of such an outstanding discovery soon reached Tehran, Reza Shah, saying that “he did not want to see again what had happened to the objects from Susa”, ordered that both pairs be kept and brought to the capital.⁶⁴ One pair of the tablets went to the Royal Palace (Kakh-e Marmar), and the other was given to the Iran Bastan Museum. One of the gold plaques was unfortunately lost after 1979, but the three remaining tablets are now at the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.

After the discovery of the Apadana Foundation tablets at Persepolis, Roland de Mecquenem, then director of the French Mission at Susa, remembered that “fragments of probably similar boxes in stone had hitherto been discovered at Susa, but the excavators had not been able to discern what type of object the fragments might represent”. It thus seems likely that similar foundation tablets of precious metal may also have been originally deposited at Susa.⁶⁵

Herzfeld’s fourth campaign of 1934 was his last one. The expedition continued to excavate

64 Mostafavi, “Amānatdāriy-e khāk”, *BT* 11, p. 80.

65 Mostafavi, “Amānatdāriy-e khāk”, *BT* 11, p. 89. De Mecquenem mentions only an empty *case en briques* found in western courtyard of the Royal apartment (Mecquenem, “Contribution à l’étude du palais achéménide de Suse”, *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran* 30, pp.12 and 22, fig.13/1). Jean Perrot’s excavations in the 1970s revealed a number of these cases de fondation made of four baked bricks laid on their edge under the pavement and walls of the Royal apartments; they were all empty (Perrot and Ladiray,



FIG. 8.18 The discovery of the Foundation tablets in the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

different parts of the Takht and replaced fallen architectural fragments in their original positions. Restoration work was also carried out at different spots on the terrace, of which one should mention the very wise measure of protecting the newly found reliefs of the eastern staircase of the Apadana by means of a screen made of reeds. Work on the subterranean canal continued but it did not provide satisfactory results. Other Achaemenid remains were found in the northern sector of the terrace

around a reused Persepolitan stone doorway. Herzfeld knew well that the remains of the city was not limited to the constructions on the Terrace. It is why he excavated a large Achaemenid building in the plain below the Terrace, the full report of which he never published.⁶⁶

In the winter of that year, the seemingly ubiquitous Byron visited Persepolis. His impression of the ruins and his tense meeting with Herzfeld were amusingly noted in his memoir, *The Road to Oxiana*. Byron did not like Achaemenid art and he was affronted by Herzfeld's prohibition against photography of the ruins. Byron's comments reveal how much Herzfeld, supported by a "code of academic malice controlled from Chicago," wanted to keep the discoveries secret.⁶⁷ It is true that Herzfeld had the right to authorize or to refuse photography of the finds, but it seems that he thought the information obtained from his excavations was his own scientific property.⁶⁸ Herzfeld never published the detailed results of his excavations at Persepolis. In this regard, Elizabeth Ettinghausen's remarks are worth mentioning:⁶⁹

In the "Persepolis affair," Herzfeld had still another great disappointment that, initially, made him quite bitter; later, he succeeded in putting it behind him. From 1931 to 1934 Herzfeld was field director of the excavations at Persepolis for the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. Although probably his most famous excavation, with spectacular results, he had never presented an extensive report on his work. When the Oriental Institute wanted to publish the material excavated by Herzfeld and his successor, Erich F. Schmidt, they did not seem to realize how sensitive an issue this was for Herzfeld. Indignant, he disassociated himself from the entire project.

"Travaux à l'Apadana (1969-1971)", *DAFI* 2, p. 20, pl. XIII/1; Ladiray, "Les données archéologiques", *Le Palais de Darius à Suse*, p. 176, figs. 154-155).

66 For a summary, see Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 3.

67 Byron, *The Road to Oxiana*, pp. 184-188.

68 It should be mentioned, however, that Herzfeld donated all of his unpublished documents (notebooks and photographs) to the Freer Gallery in Washington D.C. and expressed his desire that "the material would be made accessible to students, for study as well as publication" (Letter to A. G. Wenley A. G. Wenley, director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 18 April 1946, published by Dusinberr, "Herzfeld in Persepolis", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 149, note 44).

69 Ettinghausen, "Ernst Herzfeld: reminiscences and revelations", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 600.



FIG. 8.19 Apadana, the south-east deposit, where the second pair of the Foundation tablets were found in September 1933. Krefter is shown at left holding the gold tablet. One of Herzfeld's Arab foremen is kneeling at the right corner of the trench (Photo © the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).

He felt that “the world has changed; there is no way back; those I ‘looked up’ to are gone, and I hate, but cannot help ‘looking down,’ a thing that poisons one’s mind.” This closed the Persepolis chapter for him with a dark cloud, surely contributing to the bitterness and pessimism that colored his thinking and approach to certain people and events during his last years.

The archival documents fully reflect Herzfeld’s growing problems with the Iranian bureaucratic administration. His repetitive demands to the Iranian Ministry of Public Instruction to export the Fortification tablets to the United States had remained unanswered. He had also asked permission to take glazed bricks for laboratory studies. His photography papers and

development materials had been confiscated at the customs in Bushehr.⁷⁰ Other difficulties came from his personality. Relations between Herzfeld and his chief assistant, Krefter, who had served him with an exceptional loyalty, had become so tense that Krefter had offered his resignation.⁷¹ Moreover, with the rise of the Nazis in 1932 in Germany, neither the Americans nor the Iranian authorities desired to see a Jew at the head of the Persepolis excavations. In March 1933, when Herzfeld was on leave of absence in Europe, the Iranian embassy in Paris reported that an Iranian Jewish dealer of antiquities, residing in Paris, had offered to give information about antiquities

70 Herzfeld’s letter, 1934, National Archives of Iran, The Archives of Archaeological Missions in Iran, document 200.

71 Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, p. 160. In his diary, Krefter expressed his fear that nobody would believe his words in Chicago about the situation at Persepolis (Dr. Heiko Krefter, personal communication).



FIG. 8.20 Herzfeld and the Crown Prince of Sweden at Persepolis, the northern portico of the Central Palace, 19 November 1934. Left to right: Mostafa-Qoli Kamal Hedayat, representative of the Persian government; Ernst Herzfeld; Gustaf VI Adolf; Princess Louise (Louise Mountbatten); Prince Bertil. (Photo © the Royal Court of Sweden, the Bernadotte Library).

smuggling from Persepolis in return for a reward.⁷² The incident angered Iranian officials who blamed the director of the Oriental Institute excavations for not being vigilant in the preservation of antiquities discovered at Persepolis.

In November 1934, the Crown Prince of Sweden, Gustaf VI Adolf, visited the ruins in the company of his wife, Princess Louise, and his son, Prince Bertil. The visit was a memorable one both for Herzfeld and the Crown Prince (figs. 8.20-8.21). On this occasion,

72 Two Jewish dealers of antiquities known as the Sassoon brothers with an antiquities shop in Paris and an address in the Isfahan bazaar do seem to be the same dealers responsible for the stealing of the fragments in question. In 1931, they were a minor contributor of objects to Pope's Burlington House exhibition. Pope was apparently in business with them (Lindsay Allen, personal communication). It is not clear whether Ayyub Rabenou was also implicated in the business of the Persepolis fragments although he is mentioned in one of Herzfeld's letters as being seen at the site in the early 1930s. Rabenou acquired at least one of the fragments and sold it to Carl Holmes (I am particularly thankful to Lindsay Allen who kindly shared her archival information with me concerning the stolen fragments). Herzfeld also reported to Jayne that Pope had shipped boxes of antiquities, including six stolen reliefs from Persepolis, from various dealers along with those destined for display in London (Herzfeld to Jayne, letter dated to 15 June 1931, The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology archives, Tepe Hissar Correspondence; Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, p. 149). The same mischievous procedure was used years later by Mohsen Foroughi to export the best pieces in his collection of antiquities along with the objects destined to be displayed in the 7000 Years of Iranian Art exhibition in 1964.



FIG. 8.21 The Crown Prince Gustaf VI Adolf (at far left) and Herzfeld posed before a fallen bull protome capital at Persepolis, 19 November 1934 (Photo © the Royal Court of Sweden, the Bernadotte Library).

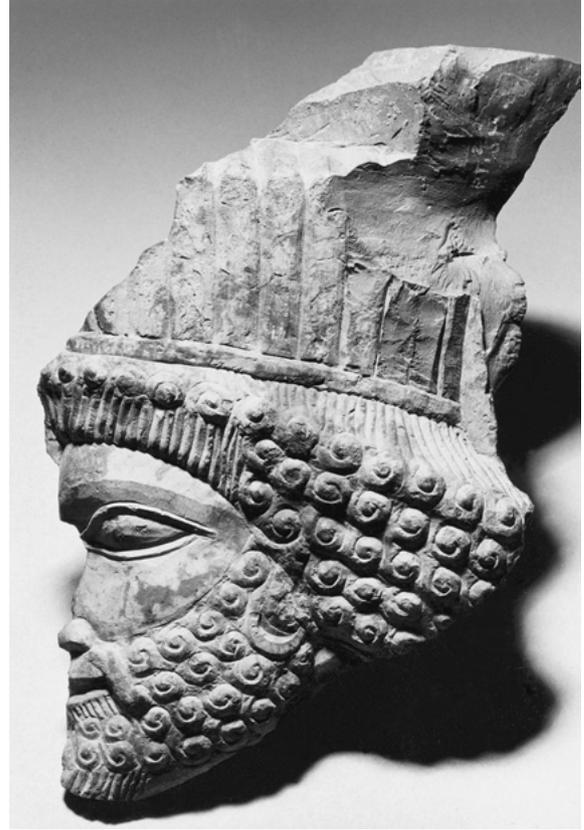


FIG. 8.22 One of the fragments given to the Crown Prince of Sweden at Persepolis (Photo © Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm).

Herzfeld offered two sculptured fragments (figs. 8.22 and 8.23) to the Crown Prince and his wife in the presence of Iranian officials.⁷³ Mostafavi writes on that incident as follows:⁷⁴

Professor Herzfeld was an outstanding scholar but unfortunately he expressed some unfriendly feelings toward Iran, and treated the Iranians with some indignity ... In November 1934, when the Crown Prince of Sweden, Gustaf VI, came to Persepolis in an unofficial visit, the late Professor Herzfeld, without any permission from the Iranian authorities, offered him a small sculptured fragment of a Persian Immortal belonging to the eastern stairway of Apa-

dana, along with another fragment of the eastern stairway of the Central Palace showing a servant. With his previous problems with the authorities, this antiquity offering resulted in his resignation, and he was replaced by Dr. Schmidt of the Oriental Institute.

Herzfeld collected and bought objects in Iran as study material prior to the promulgation of the Antiquities Law in 1930.⁷⁵ He did not take any object from his excavations at Persepolis carried out under the Antiquities Law.

73 These fragments are now in Stockholm, and one of them has been published (Ådahl, "A Fragment from Persepolis", *Medelhavsmuseet Bulletin* 13, pp. 56–59).

74 Mostafavi, *Sharh-e ejmāliyy-e āsār-e Takht-e Jamshid*, p. 35, note 1.

75 Kröger, "Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Sarre", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 63. At the time of his death in 1948, a collection of antiquities known as "the Herzfeld collection" was acquired by a Jewish restorer and collector, Joseph Ternbach, who subsequently donated them in the early 1970s to the Israel Museum. The collection included fragments of the CMB inscription from Pasargadae, excavated in 1928 (Stronach, "Ernst Herzfeld and Pasargadae", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, pp. 120-121, note 59). See also Muscarella, "Review of *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies, 1900-1959*", *JAOS* 125/3, pp. 431-432.



FIG. 8.23 The second fragment given to the Crown Prince of Sweden at Persepolis (Photo © Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm).

He was charged further with the taking of other antiquities from Iran, yet in a Confidential Memorandum Regarding the Persian Government's Charges against Professor Herzfeld Re-Export of His Personal Baggage from Persia in 1933 and 1934, that Herzfeld signed on 31 January 1935, he denied taking materials.⁷⁶ Stefan Hauser's new investigation tends to show that Herzfeld was not responsible for the gift of the two fragments to the Crown Prince of Sweden. According to German archival documents, it seems that the first fragment was presented to the Crown Prince by his "official escort" (maybe by Iranian officials on behalf of Reza Shah) and the second one by the local landlord. It is unlikely that a local landlord was present on the Terrace of Persepolis at the time of the visit, let alone offering

a relief to the Crown Prince. Here we are confronted with conflicting documents. On the one hand, Mostafavi (a witness present at the spot when the incident took place) and Iranian archival documents indicate that Herzfeld gave the two pieces to the Crown Prince of Sweden; on the other hand, documents in the archive of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs mention that Herzfeld opposed this gift-giving, and that he apparently protested against this on the spot, but was asked to allow his workers to pack the gifts. Herzfeld departed from Persepolis in company of Gustaf VI Adolf on his way back to Europe. The Iranian archival documents do not corroborate exactly Hauser's conclusion. A telegraph sent from the Iranian embassy in Stockholm to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran can help

76 Balcer, "Erich Friedrich Schmidt, 13 September 1897–3 October 1964", *AchHist* VII, p. 164.

elucidate the matter. After his return to Europe, the Crown Prince of Sweden informed the Iranian ambassador in Stockholm that he had asked Herzfeld to accompany him on his way back to Europe as a gesture of conviviality, and that the German archaeologist's luggage had been thoroughly searched at the border at Qasr-e Shirin. The Crown Prince mentioned that the accusation of Herzfeld having illegally exported Iranian antiquities, which then had prevented him from pursuing his excavations, had nothing to do with that trip.⁷⁷ In a response to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali-Asghar Hekmat, the Minister of Public Instruction, wrote that according to negotiations with the Oriental Institute, the direction of the Persepolis excavations should be entrusted to someone else. He stresses, however, that Herzfeld's studies in Iran were invaluable and that the Ministry of Public Instruction could facilitate Herzfeld's research in Iran in case he would be willing to continue his work.⁷⁸ Later, in the face of mounting problems with the Oriental Institute in Chicago, Herzfeld was obliged to resign from his directorship of the expedition. It seems that a number of factors played into the situation: The increasing disagreements between Herzfeld and Krefter; and tensions over the Oriental Institute's share of the finds. Breasted ardently pressed Herzfeld to resolve satisfactorily the allocation of the Foundation plaques of the Apadana, which the government of Iran had kept.⁷⁹ Herzfeld was a clever man. He would have never jeopardized his work and career for such a gift giving in front of Iranian officials. Be that as it may, there are countless sculptured fragments at Persepolis, the exact location of which is often uncertain, since they cannot be fitted precisely to any structure at the site. The offered fragment(s) to

the Crown Prince of Sweden were amongst those numerous unfortunate fragments that are now gathered in unseen and dusty store-rooms of the museum at Persepolis.

ERICH SCHMIDT AND THE EXCAVATIONS AT PERSEPOLIS (1935-1939)

After Herzfeld's departure, the leadership of the Oriental Institute expedition was temporarily given to Krefter, who remained in charge until Erich Schmidt's arrival in 1935. Schmidt's work in Iran has been summarized in an article by Jack Balcer that was based on the archives in the Oriental Institute.⁸⁰ Schmidt (fig. 8.24) was born in Baden-Baden, Germany on 13 September 1897.⁸¹ He came from a background very different to that of Herzfeld, who became acquainted with Iran at the very outset of his professional career. Schmidt attended a military school in Karlsruhe, and became an officer in the German army. He spent part of his youth fighting in Europe during the Great War. In one of the campaigns on the eastern front (probably in Transylvania), he was wounded and abandoned by German troops as they retreated. He was found by the Russians who, after treating his wounds in hospital, sent him to Siberia as a prisoner of war. After his escape from Siberia, he made his debut in archaeology by studying first in Berlin and then in New York (Columbia University) with Franz Boas. His first field experience was in Arizona between 1923 and 1924 under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, where he worked on ceramic sequences and stratigraphy. He later presented the results as his doctoral dissertation, *Time-Relations of Prehistoric Pottery Types in*

77 Telegraph dated to 7 February 1935 (Karimlou, *Tārāj-e mirās-e melli*, vol. 4, p. 102).

78 Letter dated to 2 March 1935 (Karimlou, *Tārāj-e mirās-e melli*, vol. 4, p. 107).

79 See Hauser and Gunter for various reasons for Herzfeld's departure, "Introduction", *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies 1900-1950*, p. 28.

80 Balcer, "Erich Friedrich Schmidt, 13 September 1897 – 3 October 1964", *AchHist* VII, pp. 147-172.

81 For his biography, see Haines "Erich F. Schmidt. September 13, 1897 - October 3, 1964", *JNES* 24, pp. 145-47; *National Encyclopaedia of American Biography* 1969, vol. 51, pp. 671-72.



FIG. 8.24 Erich Schmidt posed with *Persepolis I* (1953), probably in the early 1960s on the occasion of a press interview (Photo: Lura Janda-Schmidt and Walther Hinz).

Southern Arizona, 1929.⁸² His first acquaintance with the Oriental Institute came in 1927 when he became Joint Field Director, with Hans Henning von der Osten, of the Anatolian Expedition at Alishar Hüyük in western Turkey. He later studied ancient Near Eastern art and archaeology in Chicago, and participated at the excavation at Fara in southern Mesopotamia. Schmidt had an excellent ability to cope with the vicissitudes of fieldwork, which he attributed to his army training. His professional life spanned a period of forty years, the latter part of which he fully devoted to his work in Iran. He retired from the University of Chicago as research professor and moved to California. He was working on the last volume of his report on Persepolis at the time of his death in 1964 in Santa Barbara.⁸³

Schmidt's first visit to Iran was in 1931, when he began to excavate at Tepe Hissar, in north-eastern Iran, under the auspices of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Then, he moved to Rey, south of Tehran, where he excavated the prehistoric mound at Cheshmeh-Ali. Unfortunately, Schmidt never published any detailed report of his work at Rey. After Herzfeld's resignation, Schmidt was appointed the director of the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis and other sites in the Marvdasht plain. In 1935, James Henry Breasted died, and John D. Rockefeller ended his financial support of the Oriental Institute's expedition to Iran.⁸⁴ Despite financial problems, Schmidt found himself at the head of the Oriental Institute's expedition to Persepolis in 1935.⁸⁵ Where Herzfeld had to fight almost single-handedly to get the Persepolis excavations up and running, Schmidt was able to step into an organized and fully operational

endeavour. He was assisted by a large team of specialists. Krefter left Iran in 1935, and two new architects, John S. Bolles and Eliot F. Noyes, replaced him. Karl Bergner, Herzfeld's architectural draftsman, and Donald McCown stayed to work with Schmidt. One of the best qualified members of the mission was undoubtedly the photographer Boris Dubensky, an Iranian of Russian origin, who had worked with Schmidt at Rey, and who replaced von Busse at Persepolis.

Boris Alexander Dubensky was born in 1899 in Russia, and emigrated to the United States, probably after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. He served as field photographer of Schmidt's excavations at Rey and Tepe Hissar between 1932 and 1935. He was also assigned to the Aerial Survey of Iran project in Iran and later in Chicago for printing field negatives and arranging photographs for Schmidt until 30 April 1942.⁸⁶ Dubensky had a very intimate knowledge of structures at the site. The architectural elements at Persepolis receive the light at different time of the day, and Dubensky knew exactly what was the best moment to photograph specific places.⁸⁷ In an article published in *U.S. Camera* magazine in 1954, he explained his method to overcome different challenges posed by the structures at Persepolis.⁸⁸

Iran has an abundance of light hardly surpassed anywhere. My problem was the position of the bas-reliefs in relation to the direction of sunlight... It is common knowledge that a relief looks at its best under a lateral light and at its worst under direct light which destroys all the shadows, rendering the relief flat. I was soon to find out upon my arrival at Persepolis during the summer that the bas-reliefs most urgently needed to be photographed were those facing east towards the direct light of the sun in the morning and thus promising the worst pictures possible.

82 Haines, "Erich F. Schmidt. September 13, 1897 - October 3, 1964", *JNES* 24, p. 146.

83 Gürsan-Salzmann, *Exploring Iran: the Photography of Erich F. Schmidt, 1930-1940*, p. 52.

84 Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, p. 172.

85 In late 1935, the Oriental Institute was at the point of pulling out from Persepolis because of lack of funds. Schmidt was finally able to convince the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the University Museum in Philadelphia to share costs with the Oriental Institute beginning in 1937 (Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, p. 172).

86 I am thankful to John Larson, archivist at the Oriental Institute, who gleaned biographical information about Dubensky for me from his inactive Oriental Institute payroll/personnel file.

87 Ali Sami, personal communication.

88 Dubensky, "Persepolis", *U.S. Camera*, March 1954, p. 47.

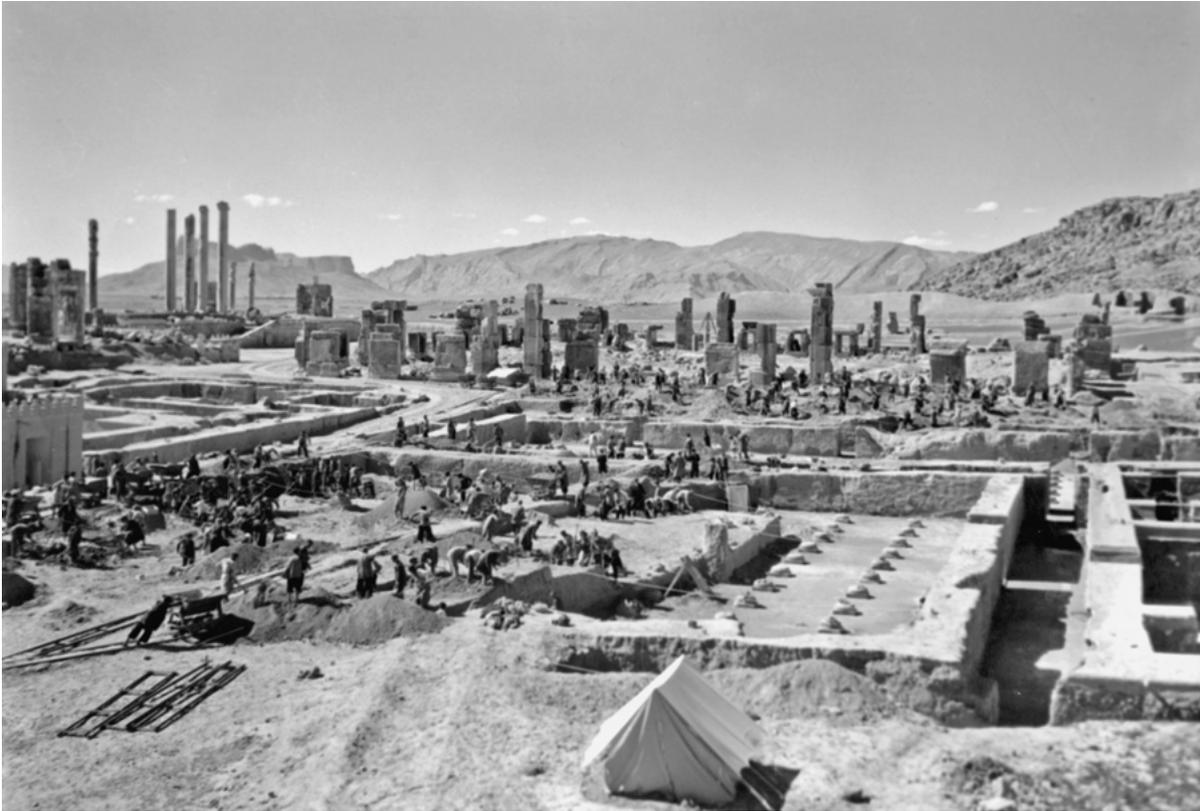


FIG. 8.25 Work crews excavating Hall 41 in the Treasury, 1938 (Photo © the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).

Dubensky had to wait until winter when the sun's orbit is at its shortest thus providing a perfect lateral lighting. He photographed the majority of bas-reliefs with a regular 13x18 Zeiss camera lens used with orthochromatic films. The photography of the reliefs required proper positioning of the camera by placing it at an adequate height and levelling it with ground glass parallel to the surface of the area to be photographed. An extreme degree of accuracy in centring the camera was required when photographing a series of mosaic pictures like the panoramic views of the Apadana's decorated staircases. To obtain a uniform panoramic view Dubensky had to shoot the object by sections, each section photographed at the same time of the day over the course of several days. A surveyor's tripod was used with a very accurate level. When the distance for the camera was fixed, a rope was stretched along

the established line marked by wooden pegs that indicated the exact positions which would be taken later by the camera.⁸⁹ This is why the best photographs ever taken of the magnificent staircases of the Apadana are those by Dubensky (published in Schmidt's *Persepolis* I, pl. 19). Dubensky prepared many of the final photographs eventually illustrating the Persepolis volumes. His withdrawal from the expedition was a loss for Schmidt, who replaced him with Ursula Wolf-Schneider in 1938.

In the beginning, Schmidt avoided working in the areas excavated by Herzfeld as he awaited Herzfeld's detailed reports. Herzfeld never gave a detailed report of his excavations, and the matter irritated John Wilson, the new director of the Oriental Institute. In a note to Schmidt, Wilson wrote: "Although he does not make specific charges against us, he is undoubtedly grieved that the Institute

89 Dubensky, "Persepolis", *US. Camera*, March 1954, pp. 48-49.



FIG. 8.26 Reza Shah's last visit to Persepolis, 1937. The Shah is addressing questions to Schmidt (seen from the back); the Crown Prince, Muhammad-Reza, is also present (Photo © Sazman-e Asnad-e Melli).

should have acceded to Iranian pressure and let him go... It is entirely possible that he will publish nothing for us unless we retain him for publication at a large fee".⁹⁰ Schmidt began to work at Persepolis by excavating the south-east sector of the Terrace, where his team found the impressive architectural remains of the garrison.⁹¹

The discovery there of seven inscribed slabs of an inscription of Xerxes has provided a series of controversial interpretations on the religious policy of this Achaemenid ruler.⁹² The remains of the fortifications at the base of Kuh-e Rahmat led to a thorough study of the defensive system of the site. During the same

season, the excavators cleared a cistern, which had been cut into the rocky slope of the mountain to a depth of about 24 meters, without reaching its floor.⁹³ In the spring of 1936, the excavation of the Treasury began (fig. 8.25), which resulted on 30 March in the discovery of the so-called audience reliefs attributed to Darius the Great. These two reliefs were found set into the rear walls of the eastern and southern porticoes of an open courtyard measuring 13 × 15.5 metres, in the eastern part of the Treasury. The height of the reliefs is 2.60 m while their length varies from 6.275 m to 6.225 m. The better preserved of the sculptures (the southern one) was removed to the

90 Wilson's letter to Schmidt, 2 October 1938, published in Balcer, "Erich Friedrich Schmidt, 13 September 1897 – 3 October 1964", *AchHist* VII, p. 167.

91 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, pp. 7-15; *Persepolis I*, pp. 206-212.

92 Lecoq, *IPA*, pp. 104-5, 256-58. For various interpretations, see Briant, *HPE*, pp. 568-570.

93 Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, pp. 80-90.



FIG. 8.27 Reza Shah listening to Hossein Bassiri's description of the recently discovered reliefs on the eastern staircase of the Apadana, 1937 (Photo © Sazman-e Asnad-e Melli).

Iran Bastan Museum. Schmidt tried in vain to obtain the eastern one for his patron institution in the United States.⁹⁴ The relief remains to this day *in situ* at Persepolis.

Still in the Treasury Schmidt found hundreds of clay tablets and sealed labels now known as the Persepolis Treasury tablets.⁹⁵ While much smaller and more limited in scope than the Fortification archive discovered by Herzfeld, the Treasury corpus (dating between 492 and 459 B.C.) also offers major opportunities for ongoing research on the social and economic history of the Achaemenid court and empire.

In the fall of 1936, Schmidt decided to dig trenches in the interior of the Hall of a Hundred Columns, where Farhad Mirza had left heaps of dirt from his excavation there in 1877. The season of 1937 involved a great deal of activity mostly concentrated here and

on the continuing excavation of the Treasury. It was in the beginning of this season that Reza Shah and his crown prince, Muhammad-Reza, visited Persepolis (figs. 8.26-8.27). On that occasion, the king gave Schmidt the authorization to resume his aerial explorations in Iran (fig. 8.28). But this significant venture was allowed to continue for only three months before being stopped forever, despite Schmidt's repeated requests for its resumption. Schmidt's decision to carry on simultaneously his excavations at both Rey and Persepolis raised concerns in Tehran. The authorities, in particular André Godard at the head of the Iranian Department of Antiquities, wanted Schmidt to give his full attention to the work at Persepolis, and where possible to restore structures at the site.⁹⁶ In a letter to Ali-Asghar Hekmat, Minister of Public Instruction, Schmidt described the problems regarding the restoration of the

94 Letter to Ali-Asqar Hekmat, Minister of Public Instruction, dated 5 April 1937, Bāyeganiy-e Rāked.

95 Schmidt, *Persepolis* I, p. 54. The Treasury tablets were published by Cameron, *PTT*, Chicago, 1948.

96 Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, p. 168.



FIG. 8.28 Schmidt's aerial view of the south-western sector of the Terrace of Persepolis taken from 122 m above ground, at 6pm, 11 June 1937 (Photo © the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).

structure in the Hall of a Hundred Columns as follows:⁹⁷

The stones of the Hundred Column Hall have been exposed to a violent conflagration. They are crackled and brittle. Any attempt to move certain lintels which are split and out of place would result in their falling to pieces. I am sure that Your Excellency would not request me to expose such architectural remains to further destruction and at the same time risk the life or the health of the crew trained for the work of restoration. On the other hand, Your Excellency may rest assured that those remains which can safely be restored will be moved to their original position as far as our technical means permit.

May I direct the attention of Your Excellency to the fact that the work of replacing and restoring and of preserving has been continuing during the entire period of my work at Persepolis, and it will continue in the future. Further, I am excavating at present with a maximal crew of laborers, not following the request of the Oriental Institute but the desire of His Imperial Majesty to speed up the clearing of the Persepolis Terrace. About two hundred and fifty men are engaged in solely clearing the refuse in front of the audience halls in order to give them a more dignified appearance. I am not expecting any particular finds at these points.

The work of the 1938 season consisted of completing the excavation of the Treasury. During the last excavation season, in 1939, the excavator's focus turned to southern sector of the Terrace. Part of the southern area of the Apadana was excavated. In the south-west corner of the Terrace the uncovering of the western wing of the Harem was completed. As an effort in historical preservation, the sections of the mud-brick walls of the Treasury were lowered to a uniform "preservable height".⁹⁸ In retrospect, the initiation of this practice (albeit motivated by an interest in preservation) seems unfortunate. The uniform wall-levelling of this building was continued by the Iranian teams after the departure of the Oriental Institute. As a result, when visiting

the remains of the Treasury today, it is difficult to gain a good sense of the dimensions and impressiveness of this vast, complex structure. One of the significant accomplishments of this season was the excavation at Naqsh-e Rostam where the clearing of the lower part of the Ka'beh Zardusht of the mounds and deposits resulted in the discovery of the inscription of Shapur I, which was called "the greatest historical inscriptions found since Behistun."⁹⁹

Schmidt left Iran in December 1939. His directorship of the excavations at Persepolis coincided with a period of increasing tension amongst European powers in Iran. One of the most unfortunate incidents of the Oriental Institute's excavations at Persepolis happened after the hurried departure of the expedition. The Oriental Institute's share of the final division consisted of ten cases of objects, which had been seized by the authorities in Iran. Probably in a gesture to please the U.S. government and in order to counter the Russian and British influences in Iran, the Iranian cabinet resolved the standoff in 1941. The lot consisted of 519 objects, of which the Iran Bastan Museum retained only 33 items for which it had no duplicates in its collections. The rest was packed in six cases and one crate. The Persepolis objects were on board an American freighter named the *S.S. City of Alma* bound from Bushehr to New York. The ship was torpedoed by a German submarine and sank in the Caribbean Sea approximately 600 km north-east of San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 2 June 1942. It appears that Schmidt was unaware of the actual circumstances of the incident as late as 1953.¹⁰⁰

Contrary to Herzfeld, who took considerable advantage of the nationalistic significance of the site to build support for his work, Schmidt's increasing tendency to concentrate more on the scientific aspects of the

97 Schmidt to Hekmat, letter dated to 20 May 1937, Bāyegāniy-e Rāked. The main material used in restoration was cement.

98 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 5.

99 Sprengling, "Shahpuhr I, the Great, on the Kaabah of Zoroaster (KZ)," *AJSLL* 57/4, p. 341. For the discovery, see Schmidt, *Persepolis III*, p. 17.

100 The incident is mentioned in Goode, *Negotiating for the Past*, pp. 182-183. I am indebted to John Larson, archivist at the Oriental Institute, who checked and clarified the information for me.

excavations may have led to governmental dissatisfaction with his efforts given the political realities in Iran at that time. The excavations of the Oriental Institute made two remarkable contributions: they paved the way to the stimulation of a broader spectrum of archaeological activities in the region, and they provided indispensable knowledge of the site through three luxurious volumes and, ul-

timately, additional documentary and interpretive studies based upon the discoveries of those years. The first volume on the structures and sculptural decorations on the Takht was offered in 1959 to Queen Elizabeth of England on the occasion of her visit to the campus of the University of Chicago. It was mentioned as the publication *par excellence* of the University.¹⁰¹

101 Haines, "Erich F. Schmidt. September 13, 1897 - October 3, 1964", *JNES* 24, p. 147.

IX

FORTY YEARS OF RESEARCH AND RESTORATION AT TAKHT-E JAMSHID: 1939-1979

After the departure of the American expedition in 1939, the Iranian government took over the task of excavation and restoration at the site. With the outbreak of the World War II, and in the absence of any foreign archaeological mission in Iran, the newly hired members of the General Department of Archaeology moved into higher ranks.¹ Consequently, Hossein Ravanbod took charge of restoration work at Persepolis for four months. From January 1939 to June 1940, Dr. Issa Behnam replaced Ravanbod. Behnam, an archaeologist, later studied in France and became Chair of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Tehran. From the end of 1940 to September 1941, Mahmoud Rad took over direction of the site. No excavation was carried out at the site. During this period, André Godard as Director of the Department of Antiquities of Iran had overarching authority over the work at Persepolis.² Godard and his wife, Yedda, were members of the French Resistance led by General de Gaulle. In the service of the Resistance, Godard was appointed the Délégué Général de la France Libre to Iran. The Iran Bastan Museum library preserves to this day issues of the *Revue de France libre* published by the Godards in Tehran during World War II.

After the War, Godard opened a special account for Persepolis in the Central Bank of Iran. The post-war years were fraught with financial difficulty for the Iranian Department of Antiquities, but Godard eventually managed to find an Iranian sponsor living in France. Mr. H.G. Tufenkdjian directed the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Paris. In October 1946, Tufenkdjian paid £1000 for the maintenance of the restoration work at Persepolis. Another sum of £1000 was paid in January 1947.³

From 1941 onwards Ali Sami (1910-1989) took charge of excavations and restorations at Persepolis. Sami was without doubt one of the major figures of Iranian archaeology (fig. 9.1). He began his career as a teacher in 1936, and then took part in the restoration and construction of some of the historical monuments in Shiraz. Meanwhile, he made the acquaintance of Erich Schmidt, who frequently came to Shiraz for administrative matters and to procure provisions while he was digging at Persepolis. After the departure of the Oriental Institute expedition, Sami started his work at Persepolis, first as an accountant for the engineer H. Ravanbod. Gradually developing an interest in excavation, he became an energetic archaeologist under Godard's supervision.

1 The name 'General Department of Archaeology' is deliberately used here (rendering the Persian title of the organization, Edārey-e Koll-e Bāstānshenāsi). Since its creation in 1910 as the Edārey-e Atiqāt, or the Department of Antiquities (reorganized fundamentally in 1930), the Iranian Department of Archaeology undertook multiple tasks of excavation, preservation, and restoration of archaeological sites all over the country, for more than forty years before breaking up into several interacting offices within the Ministry of Culture and Arts.

2 In 1926, the Department of Antiquities had only one archaeological mission. By contrast, the Department of Archaeology of Iran was expansive in its mandate, and in 1964 the number of archaeological missions ran to fourteen. By 1971, with the creation of the Centre for Archaeological Research by Firouz Bagherzadeh, this effort had grown to fifty-one missions working under its auspices and supervision. These offices were then regrouped after the Islamic Revolution under the Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran. For a detailed background and the various names of the organization, see Malek-Shahmirzadi, "Barresiy-e tahavvolāt-e motale'āt-e bāstānshenāsi dar Iran", *Majmu'eh Maqālāt-e Anjomanvārey-e Barresiy-e Masā'el-e Irānshenāsi*, pp. 408-411.

3 Bāyeganiy-e Rāked, Godard's correspondence with Essayan: October 1946.



FIG. 9.1 Ali Hakemi (left) and Ali Sami in front of the reconstructed Harem of Xerxes, spring 1950 (Photo: A. Hakemi).

Sami was later appointed director of the Scientific Bureau at Persepolis (Bongāh-e Elmiy-e Takht-e Jamshid). During the twenty years of his tenure at Persepolis (1941-1961) he excavated various parts of the site and explored other sites in the region, notably Pasargadae. This period coincided with an increasing number of official visits. Obviously, Sami's successful efforts to prepare and highlight the site were extremely important in the eyes of the government. After his retirement in 1962, Sami devoted himself to the teaching of ancient Iranian civilizations in the Pahlavi University of Shiraz until the late 1970s.⁴ His reports, published in two thick volumes of

Gozāreshhāy-e Bāstānshenāsi (*Archaeological Reports*) in 1951 and 1961, are organized in chronological order, giving a summary of annual work at Persepolis. He provides a concise description of the objects found and their context. Nevertheless, his main concern was the publication of those finds that seemed most significant to him. Thus, the whole scheme of excavation and its progress is not presented in his reports.⁵ His principal architect, who drew topographic maps and building plans, was Ali Hakemi, who went on to a brilliant career in Iranian archaeology. Hakemi is well known for his excavations at Kaluraz, in Gilan, and at the second-millennium site of Shahdad. His early study of the topography at Persepolis is a lesser-known but important contribution.⁶

The excavation of the northern part of the terrace was the main objective of Godard and Sami, who were interested in probing structures adjacent to the Hall of a Hundred Columns and its principal ways of access. Godard, who was bothered by Schmidt's somewhat dismissive characterization of these structures as "courtyards," wrote:⁷

Besogne ingrate, mais il nous semblait que les grands édifices étant connus, l'importance était désormais de savoir comment s'accrochait, au reste du plan, le vestibule monumental situé en haut de l'escalier principal et ce qu'était au juste cet autre édifice qu'on appelle 'la Porte inachevée'. Nous pensions aussi que cette cour ou ces cours d'honneur devaient être bordées de bâtiments d'apparat et d'habitation. Et puis, il fallait bien que la surface entière de la terrasse fût dégagée.

Work at the site was not interrupted in spite of the years of war and financial difficulty. The plan of the subterranean drainage system was finally completed. The aim of working on the canal system was explained by Godard:⁸

Nous chercherons aussi les réservoirs où devait aboutir l'extraordinaire système de canalisations dont les ramifications, taillées dans le roc, s'étaient

4 For Sami's biography, see Mousavi, "Obituary: Ali Sāmi", *IA* 25, pp. 189-193.

5 Sami's work at Persepolis was also summarized in a condensed English version by his friend and later university colleague, the Reverend Norman Sharp.

6 Hakemi, "Āb-e Takht-e Jamshid dar zamān-e Hakhāmaneshiyān az kojā ta'min mishodeh?", *BT* 5, pp. 1-6. This article is summarized in Mousavi, "Parsa. a stronghold for Darius", *EW* 42, pp. 219-220.

7 Godard, "Les travaux de Persépolis", *CRAIB*, 1946, p. 265.

8 Godard, "Les travaux de Persépolis", *CRAIB*, p. 267.

sous la terrasse tout entière. Herzfeld et son adjoint, F. Krefter, les ont cherchés déjà et ont déblayé, sans les trouver, plusieurs centaines de mètres de tunnels, qui mesuraient 1m.15 environ de largeur et une hauteur de 1m.75 à 2m.10. Ils attachaient une grande importance historique à ce vaste drainage, dans lequel Herzfeld voyait la preuve que le plan général des bâtiments de la terrasse avaient été établi dès le début des travaux, sous le règne de Darius Ier.

In addition to its evident historical significance, a full understanding of the subterranean canal system seemed likely to enable the excavator to re-establish the site's ancient drainage system so as to avoid the erosion of the structures by water flowing down from the mountain. Sami also conducted a series of restorations of the stairways of the Apadana and the Central Palace, and of the mud-brick walls of the Treasury. He never published a detailed report of his excavations. Given the substantial quantity of archaeological, restoration, and conservation activities at Persepolis from 1939 to 1961, the following summary has been compiled from his various reports:

1318-19 H.S./1939-42. removal of the dumps which had remained from the Oriental Institute excavations, and shortening the mud-brick walls in front of the Harem; excavating the southern area of the Apadana; discovery of an embossed gold sheet weighing 289 gm (February 1940), which may have been used to cover the wooden doors of the central hall of the palace (pl. 13); work on the Gate of All Lands.

1321 H.S./1942-43. excavation of the unexplored spots between the Apadana and the Hall of a Hundred Columns; discovery of the discarded lion-creature protome capital in the eastern portico of the Apadana; two silver *phiae* (weighing 470 gm and 394 gm respectively) found "outside the northern wall of Takht-e Jamshid" (by which he seems to mean in the debris of the northern fortification); discovery of mud-brick rooms to the east of the Hall of a Hundred Columns; uncovering of



FIG. 9.2 Lapis lazuli head of a prince found by Sami in the 32-columned hall, north of the Hall of a Hundred Columns in 1946. The eyes were probably inlaid with precious stones (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).

the northern avenue linking the Gate of All Lands to the Unfinished Gate north of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.⁹

1322 H.S./1943-44. excavations in the north court of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.

1323-25 H.S./1944-47. uncovering of a thirty-two-columned hall north of the Hall of a Hundred Columns; one of the most fascinating finds was the small head of a statue in lapis lazuli (fig. 9.2) wearing a crenellated crown; completion of the excavations in the northern and eastern areas of the Hall of a Hundred Columns.

1326-27 H.S./1947-49. uncovering adjacent rooms to the east of the Hall of a Hundred Columns; discovery of an Egyptian Blue square plaque with the design of an eagle holding

9 Sami, "Kāvoshhāy-e davāzdah sāley-e Bongāh-e Elmiy-e Takht-e Jamshid", *GB* 2, p. 186.

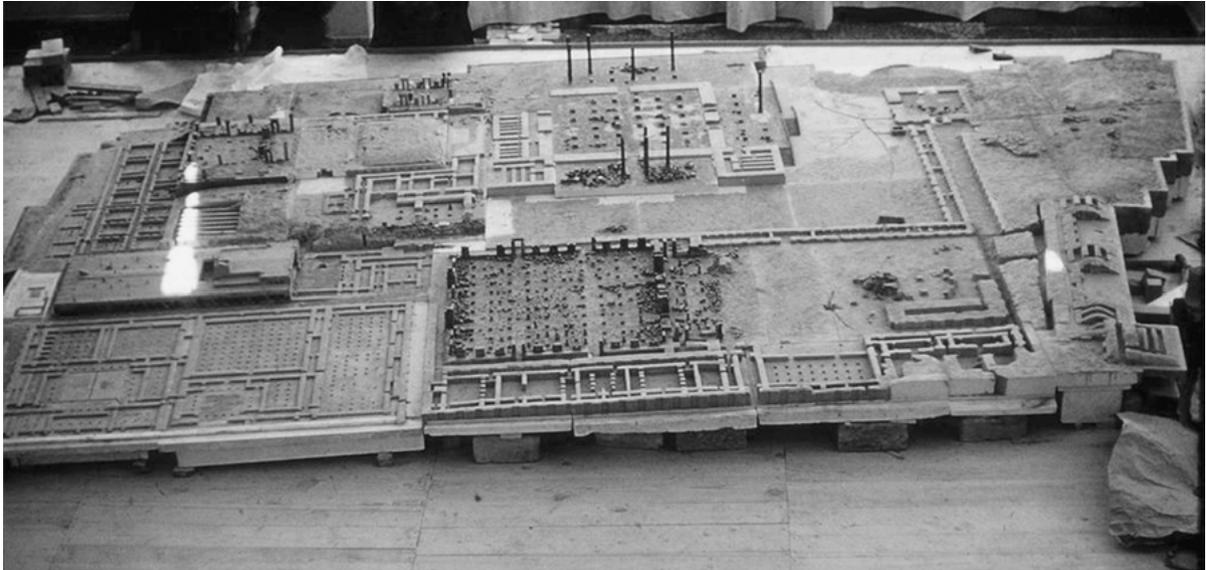


FIG. 9.3 Zakataly's model of the ruins of Persepolis.

discs (12.5 × 12.5 × 32 cm) (pl. 14). In August of this year Javad Zakataly began to make his model of the ruins at Persepolis, which he finished in 1951 (fig. 9.3). Zakataly was an excellent sculptor who was commissioned by the Iranian General Department of Archaeology to make the model.¹⁰ He began his work by carefully mapping the Tachara where his work revealed the existence of a western staircase dating from as early as the reign of Darius, which was subsequently destroyed and replaced by the construction of the staircase that bears an inscription with the name of Artaxerxes III.¹¹ Zakataly's model of the ruins was unfortunately damaged in the 1970s, and finally ended up in the storage rooms at Persepolis.¹²

1328-29 H.S./1949-51. excavation in the southern rooms of the Harem and northern area of the Thirty-two-Columned Hall; inves-

tigations at the Palace of Artaxerxes III (Palace 'H') in the south-western corner of the Terrace.

1329-30 H.S./1952-53. clearing of the area known as the Main Mound, to the west of the Harem. The excavation of the Main Mound yielded a silver coin of Ardashir I. Sami thought that the central parts of the Terrace, including the Main Mound, were better preserved and may have been reoccupied after the burning and abandonment of Persepolis. The Mound, in fact, covers a surface of 1982 m², and is 1.5 m higher than the Palace of Xerxes or Hadish. The work continued in the northern sector of the Terrace and finally led to the discovery of a pair of discarded eagle-headed capitals (figs. 9.4-9.5).¹³ It was towards the end of this season that Sami resumed the excavation of a large palatial structure in the Southern

10 Javad Beg Zakataly was a Russian officer from the Caucasus who emigrated to Iran after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Being an excellent sculptor and modeler, he was employed by the Museum of Ethnography in Tehran. He also built models of the Iran Bastan Museum (1935) and the Tarikhaneh mosque in Damghan (1946). He died in or before 1956 in Tehran (Dalvand, "Tārikh-e pajuheshhāy-e farhang-e mardom va mardomshenāsi Iran: sargozasht-e muzey-e mardomshenāsi", *Farhang-e Mardom* 26, pp. 343-344.

11 Godard, "Persépolis. Le Tachara", *Syria* 28, pp. 63.

12 The present author visited the storage rooms in Persepolis in 2003. It was very unfortunate to see that both Krefter's reconstruction model and Zakataly's model of the ruins had been vandalized.

13 The eagle-headed capitals date from the reign of Xerxes (Shahbazi, "New aspects of Persepolitan studies", *Gymnasium* 85, p. 494).

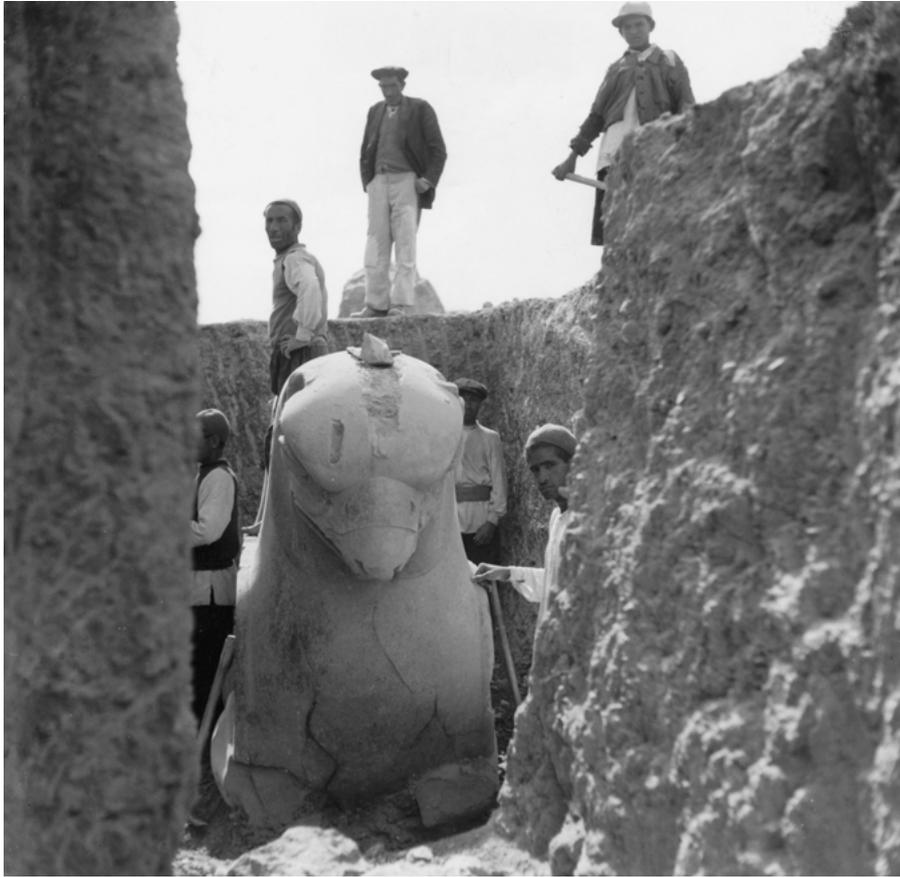


FIG. 9.4 The discovery of the eagle-headed capital in the northern area of the Terrace in 1952. A pair of these capitals were found beyond the alley that connects the Gate of All Lands to the north-west of the Terrace. The capitals had been discarded and buried shortly after their construction for some unknown reason (Photo © Marie-Thérèse Ullens de Schooten, Museum of Fine Arts Library, Harvard).

plain (Building ‘F’). It lies about 500 m to the south of the terrace, close to the mountain. It has a square twelve-columned hall covering an area of 240 m² (see chapter I). One of the column bases bears the name of Xerxes, much the same as in the other structures of the Southern plain.¹⁴ Sami reports the existence of “some traces of burning on the walls and on the floor as well, while the floor of the main hall was covered with a red plaster similar to that found at the Treasury”.¹⁵ He does not give any further information. The whole structure was to be carefully investigated and mapped

during Tadjvidi’s excavations in the 1970s. Sami was also able to excavate another important monument situated in the Southern plain. It is the closest of the buildings on the plain to the Terrace, and he called it the Small Apadana (Edifice ‘E’) (see chapter I). It is a large building, the main four-columned hall covering a surface of about 324 m² (18 m × 18 m). The main hall is flanked by three two-columned porticos. Unlike the other buildings in this area, the columns of this monument were entirely of stone and possessed lion-creature capitals much the same as those of the eastern

14 Godard, “The newly found palace of Prince Xerxes at Persepolis and sculptures which the architects rejected”, *ILN*, 2 January 1954, p. 17.

15 Sami, *Pāyetakhthāy-e Shāhānshāhan-e Hakhāmaneshi*, pp. 335-336.



FIG. 9.5 Mahmoud Mousavi in front of the eagle-headed capital, March 1968 (Photo: M. Mousavi).

portico of the Apadana. This palace was also distinguished from the others by its proximity to the Takht (about 140 m to the south of its south-west angle). The last extant column of this monument, 10 m high, was destroyed a few years prior to the visit of William Ouseley in 1811.¹⁶ Flandin and Coste included this building in their general map of the site.¹⁷ Dieulafoy gives an early plan of the building as it could be seen in the 1880s.¹⁸ Sami's brief report is unfortunately devoid of any detail.¹⁹

1330-31 H.S./1953-54. no work at Persepolis.

1331-34 H.S./1954-56. excavation at the northern part of the Takht, beyond the main avenue linking the two gates. Excavation in front of the presumed Tomb of Artaxerxes II (Tomb V in Schmidt's numbering scheme) and the presumed Tomb of Artaxerxes III (Schmidt's Tomb VI).

1335-36 H.S./1956-58. beginning of the excavation in the area to the east of the Treasury. Excavation of the rest of the eastern fortifications and the garrison quarters; discovery of the missing fragment of the Elamite version of the Daiva inscription.²⁰

16 Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, p. 62. See above, chapter IV.

17 Flandin and Coste, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. 2, pls. 66-67.

18 Dieulafoy, *L'art antique de la Perse*, vol. 2, pl. 2.

19 Sami, *Pāyetakhthāy-e Shāhānshāhan-e Hakhāmaneshi*, pp. 338-339. For a discussion of different aspects of this building, see Mousavi, "La ville de Parsa: quelques remarques sur la topographie et le système défensif de Persépolis", *IA* 34, p. 159, note 8.

20 Cameron, "The 'Daiva' inscription of Xerxes: in Elamite", *Die Welt des Orients* 2/5-6, pp. 470-476.

Sami stopped excavating in 1959, and until his retirement in 1962 no significant excavation was done at the site. It should, however, be noted that restoration and conservation of the structures regularly followed Sami's excavation activities. One of the conservation measures that Godard and Sami adopted was the protection of the reliefs of the eastern staircase of the Apadana. Godard explains the concept:²¹

L'eau n'est dangereuse à Persépolis qu'en cas de gel, mais il ne pleut pas souvent à Persépolis, et il ne gel guère. De plus, il est facile d'empêcher l'humidité de pénétrer dans la pierre en enduisant sa surface d'une encaustique quelconque. Nous en avons fait l'expérience avec du succès. Nous avons acquis la certitude que cette pierre rendue imperméable à l'eau est soigneusement défendue du soleil, se conserverait parfaitement en plein air.

For an additional measure, he affixed a folding wooden roof over the staircase. He explains the purpose as follows: "Et c'est pourquoi bien qu'à contre-cœur, peu fier du résultat esthétique de notre initiative, nous avons construit au-dessus des bas-reliefs à conserver, sur des piliers, une toiture en terrasse qui les maintient dans l'ombre". Contrary to his assessment, this latter measure proved to be both aesthetic and protective, while the other measure was an unfortunate one. Alas, the wooden canopy was discarded in 1964 and never replaced.²² A misguided protective device was adopted more recently, which consists of a huge metallic roof covering the eastern staircase of the Apadana and that of the Central Building. This roof, supposedly set up to protect the reliefs from the sun, is too elevated. The rays of the sun easily penetrate and reach one section or the other of the reliefs at almost every time of day.

KREFTER AND THE MODEL OF PERSEPOLIS

In 1961, a branch of the German Archaeological Institute was opened in Tehran, the direction of which was entrusted to Heinz Lushey. In 1962, on the occasion of the exhibition of 7000 Years of Iranian Art at Villa Hügel in Essen, Lushey met Krefter and discussed his plan for a reconstruction of Persepolis on the basis of archaeological excavations. Later, with the support of Kurt Bittel, then president of the Institute in Berlin, Lushey encouraged Krefter to bring his genius to bear upon the challenges of making a 1/200 reconstruction of Persepolis. There were a number of formidable problems, such as the reconstruction of cornices, ceilings, and roofing, and the replication in miniature of the poorly preserved and enigmatic Palaces 'G' and 'D'. According to Herzfeld's excavations, Palace 'G' and the Hadish, being similar in design, may have had the same function. Krefter assumed that Palace 'G' was "another banquet hall for the princes and nobles of All Lands, who were invited by the king".²³ A large number of the buildings of Persepolis are free-standing and isolated, and do not join onto adjacent constructions. For example, with a glance at a plan of Persepolis, one can recognize the isolation of the different structures from north to south, at the Gate of All Lands on its eastern side towards the Army Street, and at the Gate of the Army all round the building. Krefter came to the conclusion that the Gate of All Lands should be separated from the outer defence walls. Of some 895 column bases, only 331 were represented in the model.²⁴ Krefter ingeniously overcame these problems as he had done thirty

21 Godard, "Persepolis", *CRAIB* 90/2, pp. 268-269; "Les travaux de Persépolis", *Archaeologica Orientali in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, p. 128. The waxy layer was removed during the restoration work directed by Tilia (Tilia, *Studies and Restoration* II, p. 68).

22 For a photograph of the canopy, see Mostafavi, *The Land of Pārs*, p. 120, picture 52.

23 Krefter, "The model of Persepolis and its problems", *The Memorial volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, p. 284; "Persepolis im Modell", *AMI* 2, p. 131.

24 Krefter, "Persepolis im Modell", *AMI* 2, pp. 125-126.

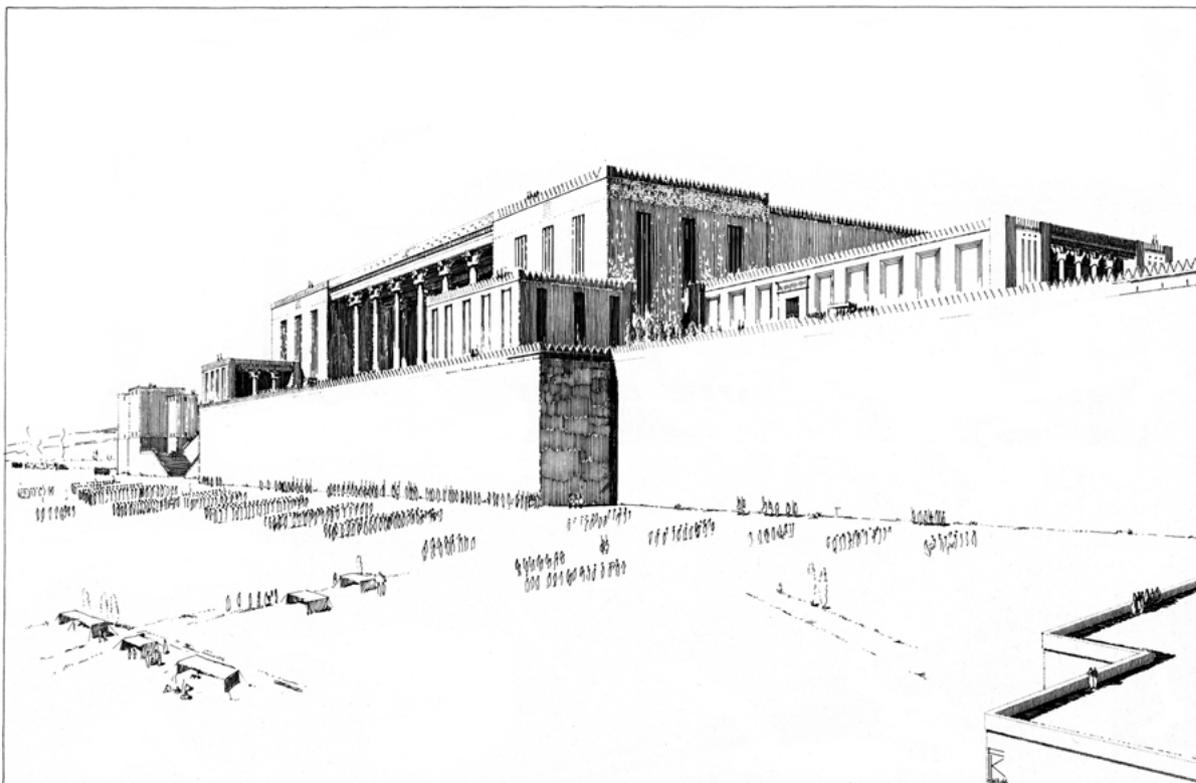


FIG. 9.6 Krefter's reconstruction of the Terrace of Persepolis published in his *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*.

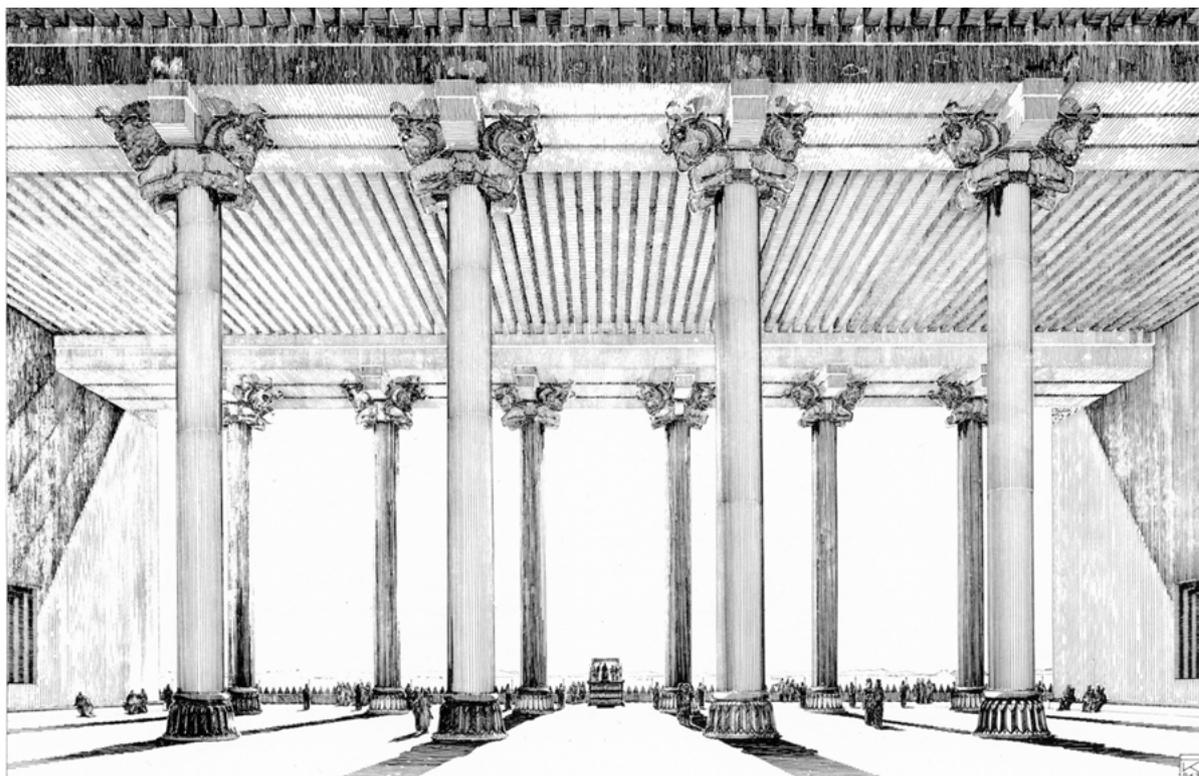


FIG. 9.7 Krefter's drawing showing the reconstructed Apadana published in his *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*.



FIG. 9.8 Krefter and his wife working on the model of Persepolis, probably in 1966 (Photo: H. Krefter).

years before in reconstructing the Harem of Xerxes. Krefter published the reconstruction of the palatial buildings on the Terrace in 1971 with thirty-five drawings (figs. 9.6-9.7).²⁵

The model was in wood (fig. 9.8). The platform measured 3.30 m by 2.75 m with a height of 10 cm. For transportation purposes, it was divided into three parts of 1.10 m by 2.75 m each, which could be screwed together. A fourth part represented the mountain district with the two rock-cut tombs and the cistern. The platform was made out of plywood, whereas the palaces, gatehouses and walls were in balsa wood to keep the model light in weight. The architectural details were cut out of cardboard with a very fine electric saw fitted out with a magnifying lens. These ele-

ments were then pasted together and coated afterwards with varnish applied with a very fine brush. In February 1967, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt) in Bonn solicited Krefter to begin working on the model. In its finished state it was a masterpiece—worthy of its presentation as a coronation gift to the king of Iran, Muhammad-Reza Shah Pahlavi, by Dr. Heinrich Lübke, President of the Federal Republic of Germany. Sadly, this model ended up in the darkened storerooms of Persepolis; it was broken and dismantled on several occasions. Another model (pl. 15), smaller than the first one, was conceived by Krefter on the occasion of his eightieth birthday and presented in an exhibition held in the Charlottenburg Museum in Berlin in 1988.²⁶

25 Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, Berlin.

26 See the exhibition catalogue, *Persepolis, ein Weltwunder der Antike*, Mainz, 1988. I am indebted to Dr. Heiko Krefter, son of the late Friedrich Krefter, who kindly provided me with some invaluable photographs of his father, some of which are published in the present book.

ITALIAN RESTORATION WORK AND OTHER SURFACE STUDIES AT PERSEPOLIS 1964-1978

In 1964, a team of Italian restorers in collaboration with the Iranian National Organization for Conservation of Historical Monuments began an expansive programme of restoration of historical monuments in Iran which lasted until 1979.²⁷ The restoration work, started first by Cesare Carbone, was subsequently entrusted to Giuseppe Tilia (1931-2001), a talented restorer of stone monuments. Tilia and his Swedish wife, Ann Brit Peterson-Tilia (1926-1988), herself an art historian and scholar lived and worked at Persepolis for fifteen years. The restoration work involved an immense amount of study, practical experimentation, and patiently exercised skill. In 1964, the decision was made to give priority to the restoration of the Gate of All Lands, the Apadana, and the Hall of a Hundred Columns. Most of the work at these three buildings was accomplished by G. Tilia, whose restorations consolidated and saved a large number of monuments and structures at Persepolis and other Achaemenid sites in Fars.²⁸ As for the ideology behind the work at Persepolis, Giuseppe Zander, head of the Italian restoration projects in Iran, wrote on the extreme delicacy of undertaking such an enterprise:²⁹

Après de longues réflexions et discussions, nous sommes arrivés à la conviction que l'anastylose – ou remise sur pied des colonnes – est licite et possible, et nous avons donc décidé de la réaliser. Nous sommes cependant arrivés à cette décision par étapes successives. Dans un premier temps, lorsque je visitai Persépolis pour la première fois, je fus frappé par le spectacle de sublime grandeur des ruines, et ayant considéré l'opinion du Prof. Luigi Crema

(UNESCO 1962) – à savoir qu'il fallait tout laisser à terre, en témoignage du tragique incendie d'Alexandre (330 av. J.-C.) qui détruisit les palais – j'adoptai l'idée prudente de renoncer à toute anastylose. Je ne fus pas non plus convaincu par la proposition faite par d'autres, de recomposer et de laisser à terre quelques colonnes...

Plus tard, cependant, un examen plus analytique des restes nous a convaincu que, dans la totalité des monuments de la terrasse persépolitaine, très rares étaient les endroits où l'on pouvait reconnaître infailliblement la trace de l'incendie et la cuisson marginale ou superficielle de la pierre; ailleurs, il n'y avait rien. De plus, aucune trace de calcification ne se voyait sur la colonne que nous envisageons de rehausser... Et puisqu'il est possible de conserver et de publier pour mémoire une documentation photographique incontestable, nous n'avons pas eu le courage de renoncer au projet séduisant de réaliser l'anastylose partout où elle était techniquement possible.

The work was first concentrated on the Gate of All Lands where one of the columns could be restored and re-erected, the Tachara (figs. 9.9-9.11), the Hadish, the Apadana and the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and the rock-cut tomb of Artaxerxes III.³⁰ Tilia cared about respecting principles of restoration, which can be seen everywhere in the ruins. He avoided the excessive use of cement (in contrast to previous restorations). Everything that has been fallen or broken was not to be rebuilt ex novo. For the restoration and re-erection of broken columns he made use of the same quarries that had been used by the Achaemenids. The missing parts were remade by Italian stone-cutters who, "whenever it was possible and advisable, kept the surface a few millimetres lower than the original one, and the date was carved on the new piece, which over the years would become the same colour as the ancient one".³¹ By patient detective work the Tilias discovered

27 The National Organization for Conservation of Historical Monuments, established in 1956, maintained close relations with the IsMEO (now IsIAO: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente), and provided financial assistance and logistic support for various restoration projects in Iran.

28 For an overview of the restoration work at Persepolis, see Harati Ardestani, "Barresiy-e āsibhāy-e nāshi az kārbord-e malāt-e māsseh va simān dar maramat āsār-e sangiy-e Takht-e Jamshid", *Parsa. Annual report of the Research Foundation of Parsa-Pasargadae* 1/1, pp. 88-96.

29 Zander, "Programme et critères se rattachant à l'oeuvre de restauration", *Travaux de restauration de monuments historiques en Iran*, p. 15.

30 Periodical reports by C. Carbone and G. Tilia (Carbone, "Comment on a commencé les restaurations à Persépolis", *Travaux de restauration de monuments historiques en Iran*, pp. 32-43).

31 Tucci's foreword to *Studies and Restorations II*, p. XI.



FIG. 9.9 The northern portico of the Palace of Darius before restoration in 1965 (Photo © IsIAO).

that the Treasury reliefs were originally designed to stand at the respective focal points of the eastern and northern Apadana reliefs. This is perhaps the greatest discovery to be made since the original excavations in the 1930s. The Tilias' research also include the complicated question of construction phases and chronology of the Terrace wall of Persepolis, the study of colours and designs that originally embellished the bas-reliefs and sculptured column capitals. Ann Britt Tilia's publications (*Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fars*, 2 volumes, Rome, 1972 and 1978) on the restoration work at Persepolis and other Achaemenid sites in Fars have remarkably enriched our knowledge of Achaemenid art and archaeology, and

have been frequently referred to in the present book.³²

In the same period, Carl Nylander, Swedish art historian and Classicist archaeologist, examined the stonework and stone-tools in the ancient Near East and in Greece and then studied the stonework at Pasargadae, Persepolis, and Susa.³³ Nylander provided the first thorough technical analysis of big stone construction at Persepolis and drew attention to the importance of hitherto neglected mason's marks.³⁴

The important field studies of Michael Roaf also seems to be in need of a mention here. Roaf drew attention to the importance of sculptor's marks and provided entirely new understandings of how the sculptors went

32 A full bibliography of the Tilias' works is given in Nylander, "Sweden iii. Swedish archaeological missions to Iran", *Enclr*, online edition.

33 Nylander, "Sweden iii. Swedish archaeological missions to Iran", *Enclr*, online edition.

34 Nylander, "Old Persian and Greek stonecutting and the chronology of Achaemenian monuments", *AJA* 69, pp. 49-55; "Masons' marks in Persepolis: a progress report", *Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran 29th October-1st November, 1973*, pp. 216-222.

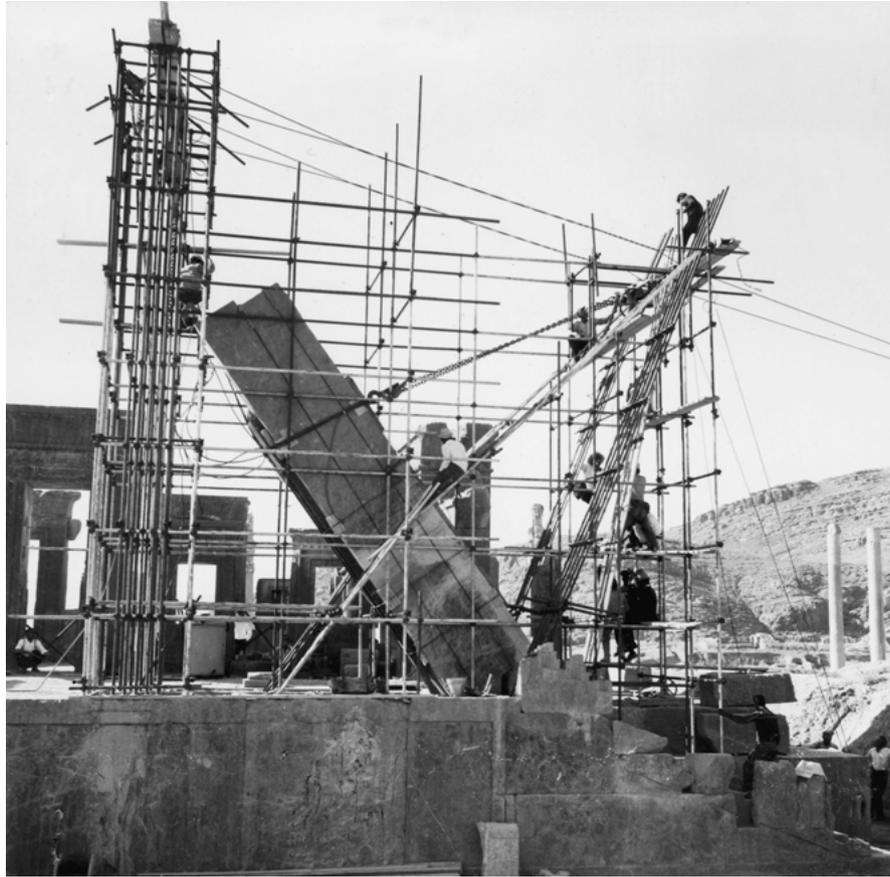


FIG. 9.10 The restoration of the eastern antae of the northern portico of the Palace of Darius by the Italian team in 1965 (Photo © ISIAO).

about their work at Persepolis. In addition, Roaf's detailed studies allowed him to provide a valuable outline of the architectural history of the Persepolis Terrace, which is still in use.³⁵

The organization of the Twenty-Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Iranian monarchy was the main impetus for the restoration work. In 1960, Shojaeddin Shafa, then counselor to the Ministry of the Court, had sent a proposal to Muhammad-Reza Shah suggesting a flamboyant pageant in the ruins of Takht-e Jamshid. With the Shah's approval, a committee was formed to make the necessary preparation

for the ceremonies but it took ten years to realize the project because the country was in the full throes of development and the government could not afford to allocate time or funds to such a celebration.³⁶ Finally 65 hectares of land in front of the Terrace were chosen for the Tent City to accommodate some sixty heads of State. The Tent City, conceived by French architects and designers, was inspired by François I's sumptuous royal camp in Picardie erected in 1520 to entertain Henry VIII of England.³⁷ The celebration involved various programmes of dance and music, of which Iannis Xenakis' avant-garde electronic

35 Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis, Iran* 21.

36 Kadivar, "2500 Years of Iranian Monarchy Celebrations in Persepolis 1971", <http://www.iranian.com/Cyrus-Kadivar/2002/January/2500/index.html>.

37 Clark, "The Party", *Celebration at Persepolis*, p. 23. The Tent City was mostly dismantled a few years ago. One of the tents was reconstructed at the 38th Basel Art Fair in 2007 (Stevenson, "Persepolis 2530", *Celebration at Persepolis*, pp. 56-61).



FIG. 9.11 The northern portico of the Palace of Darius after restoration in 1966 (Photo © IsIAO).

music named *Polytope de Persépolis* has been remembered for its unpleasantly wild sound.³⁸ The event took place between the 12th and 18th of October, 1971, the anniversary of the death of Cyrus the Great (530 B.C.), with the goal of showing Iran's glorious past and contemporary advancements. The celebrations were "to re-awaken the people of Iran to their past and re-awaken the world to Iran".³⁹ It was at the Tomb of Cyrus the Great that the Shah officially opened the celebrations by delivering a memorable speech during which he

praised the ancient ruler and proclaimed his own succession with these famous concluding words: "Kourosh, asoudeh bekhāb, mā bidārim (Cyrus, sleep in piece for we are awake)".⁴⁰ At Persepolis, a grand parade was organized which involved thousands of soldiers dressed in costumes representing different periods of Iranian history. André Castelot, the renowned French historian, wrote a play for the *son et lumière* performance on the Terrace.⁴¹ A number of scholars protested against the programme, including Giuseppe Tucci

38 On the occasion of the exhibition *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, his electronic piece, *Polytope de Persépolis*, was performed at the Los Angeles State Historic Park on 26 November 2010 under the programme *Persepolis – LA*. A note connected with this event read as follows: *No seating will be provided. Persepolis-LA will involve high volume levels and earplugs are recommended.*

39 Grigor, "Preserving the Antique Modern: Persepolis '71", *Future Anterior* 2/1, p. 27.

40 For a study of Muhammad-Reza Shah's association with the figure of Cyrus the Great, see Wiesehöfer, "Kyros, der Shah und 2500 Jahre Menschenrechte. Historische Mythenbildung zur Zeit der Pahlavi-Dynastie", *Mythen, Geschichte(n), Identitäten. Der Kampf um die Vergangenheit*, Hamburg, 1999, pp. 53-68.

41 Castelot, "Les grandes nuits de Persépolis", *Les nuits de l'histoire*, pp. 295-312. Castelot's text was slightly modified after the Revolution. The new text is by Mahmoud Mousavi.

then at the head of the IsMEO who criticized the installation in a preface to Tilia's first volume of *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis*:⁴²

I feel bound to say that I should have avoided some works carried out in such a place, in which nature and men have so strictly collaborated in creating a unique scenery, hardly to be found anywhere else. I mean the plan of *Son et Lumière* which troubles that atmosphere of concentration and silent admiration that enwraps such monuments, so heavily charged with history.

We have been actually made aware of this also in Rome, where, after a few years of putting up with it, it seems it has been finally decided, following the unanimous protest of learned and enlightened persons, to eliminate from the Roman Forum, at the expiration of the contract, the unseemliness that defaced that place, which far from claiming speeches or rhetorics, only commands contemplation and silence.

It seems to me that *Son et Lumière* as it has now been realized does not render due respect to the perspective of that solemn place, as may be seen by the attached photographs, which show huge lamps placed in the interior of the monument. I hope that some improvements may be worked out in this respect.

The celebration was, indeed, a swan song to the millennia of Iranian monarchy. The use of the site for holding artistic events and ceremonies was seen as the setting for the regime's propaganda, and gave rise to criticism by both the opposition parties in Iran and the Westerners.⁴³ The association of Persepolis with the Pahlavi regime played in disfavor of the site in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Mehdi Hodjat, the first director and co-founder of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization in 1985, criticizes the event as follows:⁴⁴

The Shiraz Art Festival, held yearly since 1970 in this religious city with a view to its connection with Persepolis and its use as the site for theatre, music, dance, etc., was judged highly avant-garde, even in Western countries. It transformed such localities to

“forbidden cities” closed to the public. A number of avant-garde artists from across the world were invited, at exorbitant fees, to experiment their latest modern artistic creations in the historic gardens and monuments of Shiraz... Obviously, such actions arouse the indignation of the people, the students and the clergy, but are physically repressed. Unwittingly, this situation causes popular aversion for relics where such events take place, reflected in a large popular rush to destroy Persepolis after the Islamic Revolution which was fortunately averted with the dedicated intervention of some people.

In 1968, the authorities decided to construct the present asphalt road along the western foot of the Terrace. Tadjvidi opposed the project, arguing that the construction would destroy traces of the second city wall of Persepolis, which he had only partially explored. Mohsen Foroughi, acting as the advisor to the Iranian Minister of Culture and Arts, on a visit to the site, responded to Tadjvidi as follows: “I understand your concern, Dr. Tadjvidi, but this is a national project, and has to be carried out even at the cost of some ancient remains. The Italian team of restorers was also invited for the purpose of preparing the site for the celebration”.⁴⁵

TADJVIDI AND THE EXCAVATION OF THE CITY OF PARSA

The excavations at Persepolis reached a standstill after Sami's retirement in 1962. With the arrival of the Italian team of restorers in 1964, there was the necessity of undertaking archaeological excavations at the site. In the autumn of 1968, Tadjvidi presented a proposal for undertaking a new programme of research at Persepolis and other sites of the Marvdasht plain with three main aims:⁴⁶

- (1) Investigation of the “origin of Achaemenid civilization and its early manifestations in Fars”.

42 Tilia, *Studies and Restorations I*, p. xii.

43 Clark, “The Party”, *Celebration at Persepolis*, p. 28.

44 Hodjat, *Cultural Heritage in Iran. Policies for an Islamic Country*, p. 201.

45 The anecdote is from M. Mousavi, who was present during the discussion.

46 Tadjvidi, “Tarh-e moqadamātiy-e barnāmey-e kāvoshhāy-e bāstānshenāsi dar Takht-e Jamshid va atrāf”, unpublished proposal.

- (2) Establishment of a regional stratigraphy that would clarify the chronology of the plain at the time of the Persian Empire.⁴⁷ Tadjvidi's programme would essentially be concentrated on the Achaemenid period. This project proposed to open soundings in the Southern plain adjacent to the terrace of Persepolis, at Istakhr, and at Pasargadae.
- (3) Establishment of a buffer zone for the site of Persepolis and its adjacent remains in order to implement more effective protection. This hypothetical zone is supposed to cover several sites in the region of Persepolis, including Naqsh-e Rostam, Naqsh-e Rajab, and the vast site of Istakhr.

One of the points on which Tadjvidi insisted was to hire workers who provided continuity with the earlier work of Sami and who were local people from the villages in the Persepolis region with sensitivity to its landscape and the idiosyncrasies of terrain. Since Herzfeld never fully published the results of his excavations, and Sami's reports, though useful, lack precision, continuity among workers who would provide anecdotal information about the history of key aspects of past efforts, was considered a priority. For Tadjvidi this continuity was even more important than the technical skill level of the workers.⁴⁸ Although the most proficient excavators, as a group, came from the ranks of those who had served the French mission at Susa over generations, the faith Tadjvidi placed in the local workers trained by Sami was validated by results. Furthermore, his strategy of hiring the local people of Fars bore fruit as his excavations pursued initiatives reaching out far beyond the strict confines of the Takht.

Ali-Akbar Tadjvidi was born into a family of artists. A painter himself, he studied art history and archaeology in Paris, and later pub-

lished a book on the modern art of Iran, (*L'Art moderne en Iran*, Tehran, 1967). In his ambitious project for Persepolis, he was assisted by various people, amongst whom were Mahmoud Kordovani (an experienced archaeologist from the Iranian General Department of Archaeology) as field director for three seasons, Mahmoud Mousavi (first as field assistant and then later as field director), and Muhammad Mehriyar (as architect and draftsman) (fig. 9.12). Armed with an excellent staff, as well as with a keen personal sense of aesthetics and urbanism, Tadjvidi was the first excavator of Persepolis to see the monumental platform as a core feature of a much larger settlement. Thanks in significant measure to his vision and his project, Parsa can now be presented graphically with confidence as an urban entity with installations in the plain that served a large regional area as well as the specialized activities on the Takht. It was with the idea of investigating the notion of an Achaemenid city planning that he started to pursue fresh archaeological activities at Takht-e Jamshid.

The Iranian General Office of Archaeology welcomed and approved Tadjvidi's proposal in 1968, and the actual fieldwork started in the winter of 1969. The remarkable rapidity with which the bureaucracy acted on this matter must be understood against a specific backdrop—one which lent energy and support to the archaeological mission but also conditioned and challenged it. The ostentatious Twenty-Five Hundredth Anniversary of Iranian monarchy was to be celebrated in the autumn of 1971. Among the conditions and constraints Tadjvidi dealt with was the necessity of carrying out work that would not hinder preparation for the grand festivities that would highlight the glorious ruins on the Takht. In return for this accommodation, Tadjvidi's research programme would benefit from the generous funds available for the preparation of the festivities.

47 In the late 1930s, Schmidt had tried in vain to establish a chronology for the whole region on the basis of ceramic sequences (Balcer, "Erich Friedrich Schmidt, 13 September 1897–3 October 1964", *AchHist* VII, p. 170).

48 Tadjvidi, "Tarh-e moqadamātiy-e barnāmey-e kāvoshhāy-e bāstānshenāsi dar Takht-e Jamshid va atrāf", p. 9.



FIG. 9.12 Persepolis, spring 1970. Left to right: Alaeddin Asna-ashar (assistant director of the Scientific Bureau of Persepolis), Muhammad Mehriyar (architect of the mission), Akbar Tadjvidi (director of excavations), Asghar Bana'i' (director of the Office for Restoration of Historical Monuments), Giuseppe Tilia (restorer and head of the Italian team of restoration), Hossein Tayeb-Na'imi (director of the Archaeological Office in Shiraz), Mahmoud Mousavi (field assistant), Mahmoud Kordovani (field assistant), and Jafar Ra'nai (director of the Scientific Bureau of Persepolis). (Photo: M. Mousavi)

An additional benefit from the arrangement was that the circumstances facilitated the strengthening of an organization at Persepolis which could generate research programmes quite independently. This initiative was welcomed by the authorities in the Ministry of Culture and Arts. The activities of the Scientific Bureau of Persepolis, founded by Sami in the late 1950s, had been considerably reduced a decade later. Thus, the idea of a research institute for Achaemenid studies based right at Persepolis was suggested by Tadjvidi in the late 1960s. With the appointment of Ali Shapur Shahbazi as Director of the Scientific Bureau of

Persepolis this idea was realized. The Institute of Achaemenid Research (*Bonyād-e Tahqiqāt-e Hakhāmaneshi*) was founded and became operational in 1973.⁴⁹

Although Tadjvidi's excavations were prematurely interrupted in 1972 and were never resumed, his initiatives had far-reaching consequences for the legacy of Persepolitan studies in Iran.⁵⁰ They also had far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the site, as we shall now see.

Initially Tadjvidi chose four areas to be tested at Persepolis:

49 Mousavi, "Persepolis in retrospect: histories of discovery and archaeological exploration at the ruins of ancient Parseh", *ArOr* 32, p. 241.

50 The creation of the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research in 1971 resulted in the reorganization of archaeological activities in Iran. As a consequence a number of large scale excavations such as Kangavar, Bishapur and Persepolis were closed.

- (1) the top of Kuh-e Rahmat Rahmat where the eastern fortification system of the site could be explored
- (2-3) areas to the south and to the north-west of the stone courtyard (Building 'C'), and
- (4) an area to the south-east of the Four-Columned Hall (Edifice 'E', or the Small Apadana), which had been previously excavated by Sami.

The grid system adopted by Schmidt's topographers (squares of 100 × 100 m) was maintained in order to transfer new discoveries to the pre-established general plan of the site. An illustrated and substantial report on these excavations was fortunately published in Persian (*Dānestanihāy-e novin*, Tehran, 1355 H.S./1976), providing the basis for the present analysis. Although two brief notes on important finds were also published in English, for more than three decades Tadjvidi's full publication has remained inaccessible to most scholars in the field.⁵¹

The book is divided into two principal parts. The first section consists of a long introduction entitled "In search of the City of Parsa". It deals with different problems of identifying and locating the city of Persepolis, the heart of which is marked by the huge stone Takht.⁵² This introduction gives a full account of archaeological and historical evidence and extends the study to another chapter, having the title "Was Persepolis ever a Capital in the Achaemenid Empire?" Here Tadjvidi examines the importance and *raison d'être* of Persepolis as a city within the empire. His conclusion is that Persepolis "without being necessarily a capital, was a sacred and symbolic place for the Persians in the heart of their homeland, an

earthly manifestation of a heavenly world with which our ancestors, by virtue of their religious education, were familiar, and one which was kept hidden from foreigners' eyes".⁵³ The next chapter is an account of the excavations. Then the second half of the book deals specifically with the excavation of the palatial complexes in the Southern plain and the fortifications on top of the mountain.

In the plain, aside from the excavation of seven architectural complexes (excluding Edifice E, or the Small Apadana, close to the terrace), Tadjvidi was determined to explore the southern wall of the Terrace and its relation to the structures located outside the platform (fig. 9.13). Earlier, Sami had dug quite a deep sounding (6 m) here, at the foot of the south wall near the inscription of Darius I. The question of why Darius should have wanted to place his inscription in such an inconspicuous spot was Tadjvidi's motivation to do some research in this area. His idea was to follow the water canals on the Terrace at the edge of the southern wall in this area since they had been altered following the modification of this portion of the wall. This investigation has enabled him to reconstruct a history of the southern wall as well as traces of the substructure of a staircase once planned for this location.⁵⁴

Another discovery at this spot allowed the excavator to suggest the existence of a channel, or at least a ditch, at the foot of the southern wall. Hakemi had earlier suggested that such a moat might have extended around the platform serving both to guarantee a supply of water and to provide protection for the Terrace.⁵⁵ Tadjvidi's team also found traces of burning in a small columned hall.⁵⁶ The charred remains were not, however, submitted

51 Tadjvidi, A., "Kāvoshhāy-e Takht-e Jamshid", *Bāstan Chenāssi va Honar-e Iran* 2, pp. 7-17 (Persian text), 20-23 (French text); "Persepolis, excavation report", *Iran* 8, pp. 186-87; "Persepolis, excavation report", *Iran* 11, pp. 200-201; "Darbārey-e shahr-e Pārsēh, gahvārey-e tamaddoni derakhshān", *HM* 156, pp. 2-11.

52 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 6-41.

53 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 204-207.

54 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 201-207; Mousavi, "Parsa, a stronghold for Darius", *EW* 42, p. 212.

55 Hakemi, "Āb-e Takht-e Jamshid dar zamān-e Hakhāmaneshiyān az kojā ta'min mishodeh?", *BT* 5, 5-6; Hakemi, personal communication, letter dated to 21 November 1988.

56 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, p. 10.

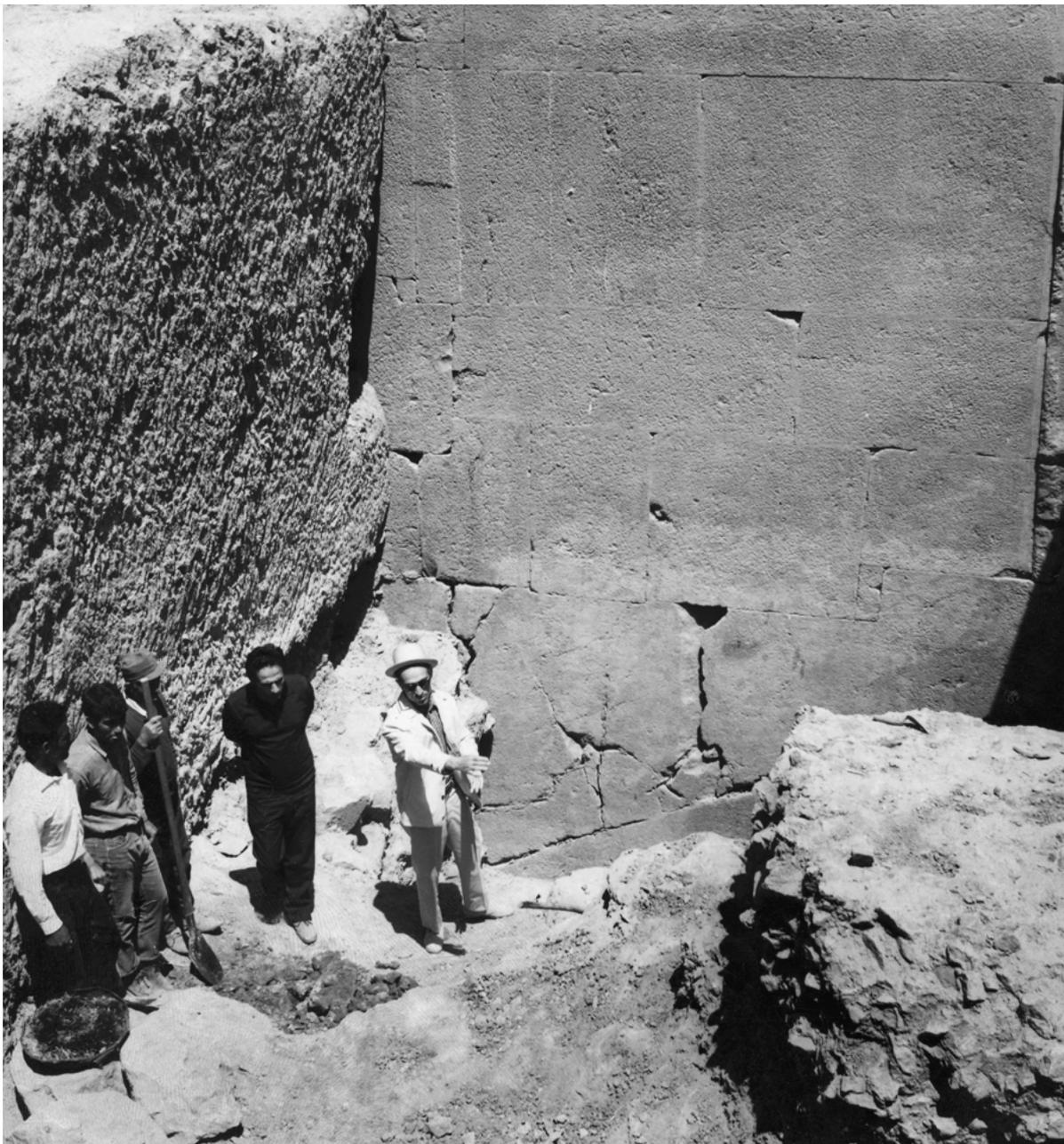


FIG. 9.13 View of the “Deep Trench” at the foot of the southern wall of the Persepolis Takht during the 1971-72 season. Akbar Tadjvidi (dressed in white) gives instructions, while his field assistant, Mahmoud Mousavi (in black) stands between Tadjvidi and members of the work crew. Second from left is Ali Zar’e, who emerged as one of the most distinguished foremen ever trained in Iranian archaeology (Photo: M. Mousavi).



FIG. 9.14 Trench revealing a section of the southern foundation wall of one of the mud-brick platforms in the plain, upon which various architectural ensembles were erected (Photo: M. Mousavi).

to radiocarbon analysis. One of the trenches revealed a section of the southern foundation wall in mud-brick upon which various architectural complexes were erected (fig. 9.14).

Another important aspect of Iranian excavations in this period was the exploration of the fortifications on top of Kuh-e Rahmat. Herzfeld had already documented the existence of these structures in his report, and Schmidt had pinpointed them on his aerial analysis of the site.⁵⁷ Tadjvidi explains his intention to explore the hillocks on top of Kuh-e Rahmat as follows:⁵⁸

When the Archaeological Service of the Ministry of Culture and Arts charged me, in the course of the

year 1968, to proceed with investigations and excavations at Persepolis, I thought it would be worthwhile to excavate these remains with a view to identifying the so-called fortifications. After some preliminary studies I chose the highest mound, which dominated the terrace and could be considered as the highest of the ancient remains at the site. From the beginning of the second day of the excavations we could easily distinguish, at a depth of 30 cm., the remains of mud-brick walls that were still almost totally intact. We stopped using picks and, in co-operation with our more experienced workmen, we continued uncovering the walls, this time with knives and brushes. The result of our excavations was the discovery of a number of corridors, rooms, a vaulted fortified tower and a small central court—all of which helped to make up part of a single fortified point in the continuous defences of the Persepolitan terrace.

57 Herzfeld, "Rapport sur l'état actuel des ruines de Persépolis et propositions pour leur conservation", *AMI* 1, fig. 44; Schmidt, *The Treasury of Persepolis*, fig. 4; *Flights over Ancient Cities of Iran*, pl. 2.

58 Tadjvidi, "Persepolis", *Iran* 8, p. 186.

Tadjvidi decided to excavate a portion of the upper fortifications, which comprised three towers and their adjacent structures.⁵⁹ Aside from the originality of architectural features and some 150 bronze arrowheads, probably the most interesting artifactual discovery here was a collection of sealed clay labels bearing impressions of a cylinder seal that matches up with one already known from the Persepolis Treasury archive depicting a combat.⁶⁰

In terms of architecture, most of the arrow-slots in the mud-brick fortification walls were found blocked in antiquity, and several small rooms in the fortifications revealed traces of abandonment. Corridors were covered with vaults constructed from long curved mud-bricks similar to those of Median fort at Nush-i Jan.⁶¹ Tadjvidi dates the fortifications to an early phase of construction activities, and insists on the fact that they had already been abandoned before the destruction of the city by the Macedonian troops in 330 B.C.⁶²

The most significant aspect of Tadjvidi's programme rests with his attempt to prove the existence of an urban entity at Persepolis and to articulate its nature. The interruption of his work in 1972 was a regrettable blow to the long tradition of archaeological activities at the site. Had Tadjvidi been able to continue his investigations, we might be better equipped than we are now to deal with the questions regarding the spatial organization of the city and the settlement pattern of the area during the Achaemenid period. As things stand now, the palatial complexes outside the Terrace are in desperate need of protection and restoration.

In 1974, Ali-Reza Shapur Shahbazi (fig. 9.15) became director of the site. Shahbazi, a native of Shiraz, studied ancient history in the University of Shiraz, and obtained his doctorate from the University of London in 1973. His

perceptive study, *The Irano-Lycian Monuments*, based on his thesis was published in Shiraz in 1975. He served a year as the curator of the Historical Period in the Iran Bastan Museum before becoming the director of the Institute of Achaemenid Research at Persepolis, a position he held until 1979. Aside from a large array of interests and numerous scholarly publications on the history of ancient Iran, Shahbazi published the authoritative guide to the monuments at Persepolis (*Persepolis Illustrated*) translated into English, French, and German. Being deeply attached to the ruins, he extensively published on different aspects of Achaemenid studies until his death in 2006.⁶³ Shahbazi carried out a limited rescue excavation in the spring of 1975. Torrential rains had eroded the vestiges of the eastern section of the Tripylon. Here there had originally been a vestibule east of the eastern doorway (linked to the Harem) and a long side room. The combined forces of early excavations and natural erosion of construction thus had demolished this part of the core—to the extent of turning it into an ugly slope of debris level with the Apadana courtyard. Rains had even endangered the foundation of the eastern doorway. Though opposed to any excavation in the absence of the head of restoration efforts, Giuseppe Tilia, Shahbazi had to take action in order to prevent further damage. He cleaned out the area at the foot of the eastern doorway and then reinforced it. During the cleaning, mud-brick fragments (33 × 33 cm) as well as paint pigments of yellow, red and Egyptian blue were found, which had once been applied to the reliefs. Sculpture fragments were also uncovered. The largest one was a piece about the size of a fist, showing well-groomed beard curls. To the north-east of the doorway, Shahbazi encountered the foundations of a mud-brick wall which had originally

59 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 187-213.

60 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, pp. 201-217; Garrison and Root, *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, vol. 1, p. 34.

61 Tadjvidi, "Persepolis", *Iran* 8, p. 187; Roaf, "The role of the Medes in the architecture of the Achaemenids", *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, p. 251.

62 Tadjvidi, *Dānestanihāy-e novin*, 212.

63 For a full biography, see Abdi, "Obituary: A. Shapur Shahbazi 1942-2006", *Iran* 45, pp. v-vi.



FIG. 9.15 Ali Shapur Shahbazi at Persepolis (Photo: Rudabeh Shahbazi).

formed the northern wall of the vestibule (and so blocked the south-eastern corner of the Apadana courtyard). This wall partly existed until earlier excavators levelled it to join the Apadana courtyard to the Harem. Aside from this, Shahbazi did two other things. He restored the stone staircase linking the so-called “Harem courtyard to the original vestibule leading to the Apadana courtyard. In fact, the spot had become a dangerous slope and yet was always used by visitors to and from the Harem”. He walled up the eastern sector of

the Central Palace with stone slabs, thus “reconstructing the original form” of the main hall and its southern portico. He also wanted to continue the work and restore the foundation of the vestibule and long side room. For this reason, he reconstructed the retaining wall west of the Harem courtyard, but when it came to a seven-meter height, this project was stopped on Tilia’s suggestion.⁶⁴ During Shahbazi’s tenure, restoration and conservation of the site were regularly maintained until the end of the 1970s.

64 The report prepared by the excavator and sent to Tehran was never published. (Shahbazi, personal communication).

AFTERWORD

A fair assessment of the activities at Persepolis in the past three decades cannot be fully presented because of a number of obstacles. A large number of operations at the site, such as restoration work, limited rescue excavations, and surveys, have remained so far unpublished. There is no substantial report for most of the work carried out in the 1980s or even early 1990s. Another issue is the lack of access to the unpublished materials and reports, which is a serious impediment to any objective assessment of the archaeological activities at Persepolis. There is also the problem of immediacy which affects the writing of the contemporary history of archaeology.¹ The passage of time will certainly reveal unknown facts, untold stories, deeds and misdeeds with regard to the recent archaeological history of Iran in general, and of Persepolis in particular.

One of the long-lasting impacts of the Islamic Revolution has been the new vision with respect to archaeology and its implications regarding the ancient monuments and sites, their restoration, preservation, and excavation. The excavations at the site had been interrupted before with the departure of Tadjvidi. After 1979, the direction of the site was handed over several times to different people whose interest could not go beyond daily administrative matters. The Institute of Achaemenid Research (Bonyād-e Tahqiqāt-e Hakhāmaneshi), founded in 1973, became inactive for years. The restoration work at the site was maintained with a minimum of staff after the departure of the Italian team. The presence of Hasan Rahsaz, one of Tilia's assistants who

had been trained in Italy, was beneficial to the restoration work. Nevertheless, the large number of structures at Persepolis and other sites in Fars has been a serious challenge to the new, understaffed group of restorers with a very limited budget and technical means. Moreover, there has never been an effort to properly hire and train new specialists in the restoration of stone monuments to take over the task of conservation and preservation of Achaemenid sites.

It should be remembered that archaeology in Iran suffered from the self-serving demonstrations and propaganda by the Pahlavi government. The Persepolis ceremony was frequently recalled as an example of the despotism of ancient monarchs. Footage from the ceremony was occasionally played on national television in the first few years after the Revolution as an example.² Even though Persepolis was registered on the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 1979, there were rumors of an attempt to bulldoze the site by a mob led by one of the early revolutionary figures in the first few weeks after the Revolution. There is no record of such destruction, but some of the column bases and stone structures in the palatial buildings outside the Terrace were vandalized.³

After a few years reconciliation with archaeology came at last and the site of Persepolis became one of the focal points of archaeological and conservation activities. The interest in Iran's pre-Islamic past was officially expressed on 20 April 1991, when President Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani paid a visit to Persepolis and wrote in the guest book:⁴

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- 1 The problem has been discussed by Christenson, "The past is still alive: the immediacy problem and writing the history of archaeology", *Tracing Archaeology's Past*, pp. 163-168.
 - 2 Abdi, "Nationalism, politics, and the development of archaeology in Iran", *AJA* 105/1, p. 70. I would like to remind that the organization of the Persepolis ceremony was the driving force behind the Italian restoration projects and the Iranian excavations at Persepolis and other sites of Fars.
 - 3 Personal observation during a visit to Persepolis in the company of my father, Mahmoud Mousavi, and Ali Valinoori, in the spring of 1983.
 - 4 Quoted in Abdi, "Nationalism, politics, and the development of archaeology in Iran", *AJA* 105/1, p. 72.

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate visiting the incredible remains at Persepolis provokes considerable national pride in every individual. By seeing these remains, our people will discover their own capabilities and the cultural background of their country, and will believe that they will recover their historical role in the future to uphold upon this talent and foundation, the blazing torch of Islam to light the path of other nations.

The work at Persepolis was given a boost with the creation of the Parsa-Pasargadae Research Foundation (PPRF) in 2002. The director of the PPRF, Muhammad Hassan Talebian, an architect by training, welcomed new projects of conservation, restoration, and excavation at Achaemenid sites in Fars. Under his tenure, the PPRF supervised and/or sponsored a number of projects. One of the initial tasks of the new organization was to extend the buffer zone of Persepolis by purchasing 52 hectares of the nearby land.⁵ The PPRF also carried out archaeological fieldwork at Persepolis. Three archaeological investigations deserve to be mentioned here: the geomagnetic survey of the adjacent plain, the study of Achaemenid pottery found in the excavations of the fortifications on top of Kuh-e Rahmat, and the excavation and dredging of the subterranean canals. A joint Franco-Iranian team led by Rémy Boucharlat carried out surface reconnaissances in the Persepolis area between 2005 and 2008. The goal was to assess the impact of the Achaemenid occupation in the plain of Marv-dasht.⁶ The surveys covered major zones in the vicinity of Persepolis based on previous in-

vestigations, in particular William Sumner's survey of the plain. A ground penetrating radar survey at the foot of the western wall of the Terrace proved to be disappointing owing to the general absence of archaeological remains near the surface.⁷ Better results were obtained through magnetic surveys in the areas located to the west and north-west of Persepolis. The first area was the one labelled by Sumner as Persepolis West. The site consists of a series of low mounds transected by two large irrigation canals, a number of small ditches, and various non-archaeological excavations. The highest mound in the group rises less than 3 m. above plain level. The density of Achaemenid sherds on the surface is relatively high and broken bricks and stone fragments also occur on the surface.⁸ Most of the site has since been destroyed because of dense agricultural activities in the plain. Some 500 m in direction of the Persepolis Terrace, north of the large modern parking (Parking West), field-walking surveys led to a revision of the limits of what Sumner labeled Persepolis West to a wider zone named the Persepolis North-west area. Magnetic surveys in this zone revealed traces of a network of parallel walls, the interpretation of which is a matter of debate.⁹ The PPRF conducted a series of geomagnetic surveys at Persepolis between 2003 and 2005 with the objective of recording archaeological remains outside the Terrace. The results are unpublished.¹⁰ Muhammad-Taqi Atai's study of the Achaemenid ceramics found in Tadjvidi's excavations is significant

5 Talebian, "A review of research and restoration activities at Parsa-Pasargadae: analysis, evaluation and future perspectives", *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, p. 301.

6 The results are presented in a doctoral dissertation (Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, unpublished thesis, Univeristy of Lyon II, 2011), and a forthcoming article (Boucharlat, De Schacht, and Gondet, "Archaeological survey in the Persepolis plain 2005-2008: extension of the site and hydraulic investments in the plain", *Territorial System and Ideology of the Achaemenid State: Persepolis and its Settlement*, forthcoming).

7 Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, p. 175 and fig. 5-8.

8 Sumner, "Achaemenid settlement in the Persepolis plain", *AJA* 90/1, p. 9.

9 Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, pp. 400-401; Boucharlat, De Schacht, and Gondet, "Archaeological survey in the Persepolis plain 2005-2008: extension of the site and hydraulic investments in the plain", *Territorial System and Ideology of the Achaemenid State: Persepolis and its Settlement*, forthcoming.

10 The results were made available to the French team working at the site (see Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, p. 187).

in that it provides a good basis for the typology, quantity, and function of ceramics at the site.¹¹ In the 1930s, Herzfeld mapped the system of water conduits and drains on the Terrace. Sami undertook the dredging of some of the canals in the 1950s. Parts of the conduits were restored by Tilia. In 2003, it was decided to dredge those canals which had been filled with mud and silt due to a general lack of maintenance. Excavations were carried out at twenty-six areas of the system in order to find the conduits which evacuated water to the Southern plain.¹²

As for archaeological excavations, a joint Iranian-Italian team co-directed by Pierfrancesco Callieri and Alireza Askari Chaverdi carried out two seasons of excavation in the vicinity of the Terrace, the location of which were chosen according to the results obtained from the geomagnetic surveys. The excavations were sponsored by the former Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research, PPRF, and the University of Bologna. Thirteen trenches were opened during two seasons of work in 2008 and 2009. The excavations were carried out in the vicinity of Parking West, near Tol-e Jaliyan, and in the mounds at the site Persepolis West. In absence of any published report, the following information has been gleaned from *Tehran Times*:¹³

In the first season, which was concluded on November 7, 2008, six stratigraphic trial trenches were dug in two areas of the site known as Persepolis West, lying to the northwest of the Achaemenid Terrace of Persepolis.

In the immediate vicinity of the Persepolis parking lot, an imposing wall 1.8 meters wide was

brought to light, having a stone foundation and pressed earth elevation. This wall, which was recognized thanks to the geophysical surveys carried out in the area, was built probably at the end of the Achaemenid period above an earlier mud-brick wall of the Achaemenid era. The structure most likely represents a stretch of an important architectural feature of the town, perhaps a fortification wall, and will be the object of extensive excavation in the next seasons, which will focus on the architectural aspects of the town.

About 500 meters further to the west, two trial trenches brought to light important evidence which suggests that in the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods the area was dedicated to craft activities. In fact, one of the trial trenches yielded a kiln for pottery making, while the other was characterized by the presence of a large number of successive dump pits extremely rich in pottery shards, bricks, charcoal, and bones. Also for this area, the very promising results of the trial trenches suggest that extensive excavations will be carried out in the next season. Being one of the few stratigraphic excavations to have been carried out in the area of Persepolis for the historic period, this activity will allow a comprehensive and fundamental study of the pottery as well as of the other classes of materials recovered for the historic period from the Achaemenid through the Islamic periods, and thus bring a relevant contribution to the knowledge of everyday life in ancient Fars.

In an interview with *Tehran Times* on November 10, 2008, Callieri claimed that the “new discoveries provided the first information about the city where the common people lived”.¹⁴ The joint archaeological team investigated the area at the foot of the Terrace and beyond, with the aim of locating the remains of Parsa or Mattezish. The latter is mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, and may have been located in the vicinity of

11 Atai, “Gozāresh-e fanniy-e motāle’y-e sofālhāy-e bārōuy-e Takht-e Jamshid”, *Parsa. Annual report of the Research Foundation of Parsa-Pasargadae* 1/1, pp. 16-30.

12 Zare, “Amaliyāt lāyubiy-e ābrāhehāy-e takhtgāh Takht-e Jamshid”, *Parsa. Annual report of the Research Foundation of Parsa-Pasargadae* 1/1, pp. 45-51; Askari-Chaverdi, “Kāvosh dar Takht-e Jamshid: gozāresh-e bāstānshenākhtiy-e bakhshi az amaliyāt-e lāyubiy-e ābrāhehāy-e soffey-e Takht-e Jamshid”, *Parsa. Annual report of the Research Foundation of Parsa-Pasargadae* 1/1, pp. 31-44; see also, Moradi-Jalal, M. et al., “Water resource management for Iran’s Persepolis complex”, *Ancient Water Technologies*, pp. 87-102.

13 Two reports have so far been presented to the former Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (Askari et al., *From Palace to Town: an integrated multidisciplinary approach to Persepolis terrace and town - 1 st Season 2008/1387; 2nd season 2009/1388*). The reports remain unpublished but preliminary results were made available to the French team surveying the area (see Gondet, *Occupation de la plaine de Persépolis au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. (Fars central, Iran)*, p. 233).

14 Golpira, “Parsa emerges from the shadow of Persepolis”, *Tehran Times*, http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=183888

Persepolis.¹⁵ In this interview, the English rendering of which lacks clarity, one reads that in one of the six trenches opened in the plain, on “one side of a wall”, the excavators found traces of “an industrial area” indicated by the discovery of “a kiln and a lot of pits for dumping”. One of the prominent finds consists of a five-centimeter fragment of a blue ware in the form of a wing. Other finds include Greek potsherds, and a “frataraka” coin.

The past twenty years have seen a growth of interest in reconstructing Persepolis, either in model or in digital format. In 1992, Farzin Rezaeian, an Iranian documentary filmmaker who specializes in the art and architecture of ancient Iran, began a project to chronicle Iranian civilization from prehistory to the end of the nineteenth century in seven documentaries. During his research, Rezaeian became particularly interested in Persepolis, and decided to devote a full documentary film to the site, accompanied by a virtual reconstruction of the buildings on the Terrace. The 40-minute film, named “Persepolis Recreated”, leads the viewer on a tour of the buildings. The virtual reconstruction based on Krefter’s work switches between real-life images and computer simulations to convey a feeling of the majestic monuments and their interiors as a visitor of twenty-five centuries ago would have seen them. Rezaeian’s film is a thorough documentary on the subject Persepolis, accompanied by the virtual reconstruction, for which a number of leading scholars in the field of Achaemenid studies were consulted. The documentary premiered in Chicago in 2004.

In contrast to Rezaeian’s film, which creates a dramatic atmosphere of grandeur with the reconstruction of the palaces in black, red, and gold, another project by Kouros Afhami and Wolfgang Gambke focuses on architectural precision and details, and takes account of the importance of colour in the artistic realization of sculptures and bas-reliefs at Persepolis (pl. 16). Afhami and Gambke are architects by training, and use three-dimensional models

and virtual reconstructions. Their skill in using this form of modelling and virtual visualization, combined with a keen knowledge of the archaeology and architectural history of the site has been advantageous. Their project, which began in 2001, and which resulted in a 60-minute movie, “Persepolis – a glimpse of an empire”, was first shown at the World of Achaemenid Persia conference at the British Museum in September 2005, then on the Franco-German TV channel, ARTE, in 2006. All of the reconstruction models are available at their website (www.Persepolis3d.com). The goals of the new reconstruction are to show the buildings of the royal city, and the complexities of its urban design, including the palatial buildings outside the Terrace. The virtual reconstruction presented is based on the documentation obtained from archaeological excavations, relying mostly on Krefter’s drawings and his two scale models.

The new German reconstruction of Persepolis was at the origin of two subsequent productions in Germany. In April 2010, the German TV channel Terra X premiered a full documentary on Achaemenid Persia named *Persien - Die Erbschaft des Feuers* (Persia: the heritage of fire), with some fictitious parts in which one can see Herzfeld and Krefter at work in Iran. The actors, however, could have been more carefully chosen to better incarnate the two German archaeologists. In the summer of 2009, the Historical Museum of the Palatine, in Speyer, organized the exhibition *Das Persische Weltreiche: Pracht und Prunk des Grosskönige (The Persian Empire: Splendour and Grandeur of the Great Kings)*. In addition to archaeological finds and artworks, the museum displayed the full size model of a column capital from the Apadana based on the reproduction plans of persepolis3d.com. This model was constructed to present for the first time the painted features of an Achaemenid column at Persepolis.¹⁶

Another reconstruction has been conceived of by Muhammad-Mehdi Fathinezhad Fard,

15 Hallock, *PFT*, pp. 17-18; Sumner, “Achaemenid settlement in the Persepolis plain”, *AJA* 90, p. 20.

16 For the news, see <http://www.persepolis3d.com/news.html>.

an independent Iranian researcher in Shiraz. Fathinezhad Fard, who graduated from the School of Civil Engineering, University of Shiraz, in 1999, has been enthusiastically interested in making models of old buildings. Being a native of Fars, he enjoyed long years of admiring the ruins. He spent fourteen years of hard work on creating a three dimensional model of Persepolis displayed now in his own apartment (pls. 17–18). The scale of the model is 1:75 and the actual size of the model is about 20 square metres. The model is mainly made of plaster and put together with resins. All the bas-reliefs on stone panels and stairways are represented in detail, which required a tremendous effort in precision and patience.¹⁷

In addition, one should mention the Franco-Belgian comic book, *Persépolis*, in the series *Les Voyages d'Alix*, in which a young adventurer from Gaul explores the Achaemenid palaces and sites at Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Pasargadae.¹⁸ The series created by Jacques Martin, the French writer and artist, a longtime collaborator of Georges Rémi (Hergé), and Cédric Hervan, the highly gifted Belgian cartoonist. The result is an interesting voyage to the heart of the Persian empire during which Alix visits different monuments in the region of Persepolis. The reconstruction introduces life in Persepolis, and the buildings are represented as places of ceremony, gathering, working, and daily life (pl. 19).

Throughout this book, I have attempted to present an overall picture of Persepolis after its destruction. I have tried to provide a sense of its *longue durée* to give a vivid idea of how the site evolved through the ages. I am aware that I have left aside some important aspects of the subject and certain problems pertinent to the study of the site that has been a symbol of identity in Iran since its foundation. Its significance has in some ways encouraged scientific exploration of the ruins and in other re-

spects it has tended to deflect such energies. A great many questions remain to be asked of Persepolis.

The excavations to date have greatly enriched our knowledge of the Achaemenid empire. But we still know remarkably little of the archaeology of Fars (its material culture, pottery sequencing, and the like) in the Achaemenid period. In spite of these regrets and hopes for future work that may adequately address such issues, there is another aspect of the contribution of the Persepolis excavations that deserves note. The effect of these excavations on the future of Iranian archaeology has been great. It was the project for the preservation of Persepolis that inspired the Iranian government to approve the Antiquities Law, which consequently promoted and regulated archaeological activities in the country. Moreover, the archaeological excavations at Persepolis have provided numerous opportunities for training in excavation technique, restoration, and interpretive research, the results of which have been remarkable not only in terms of the obvious explosion of art historical/historical discussion based on the revelations of the last century, but also in terms of technical achievement in Iran.¹⁹ It has been said that the Iranians are bound to a three-way magnetic attraction to their place in the world. They are bound to their glorious ancient past, to the religious and spiritual impact of Islam, and to the technological and modernizing appeal of the West. Persepolis seems to satisfy the complex and sometimes intertwining importance of all three of these profound impulses. Persepolis is the place where a symbiosis has taken shape in the course of ages. Persepolis reflects a song of metamorphosis, in keeping with André Malraux's words, in which the glory of the past, the artistic heritage, the religious symbolism, and the beginnings of Iranian modernization are "librettos to an inexhaustible music".

17 For views of the model, see www.parsemodel.com. An interview with Fathinezhad Fard has been published at <http://www.isna.ir/ISNA/NewsView.aspx?ID=News-1721649&Lang=P>.

18 Hervan and Martin, *Les Voyages d'Alix: Persépolis*.

19 In fact, the best restorers of stone monuments in Iran today are those who trained at Persepolis; equally the best excavation foremen were those who had worked at or near Persepolis.

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PLATES



PL. 1 Aerial view of Persepolis and its setting taken from the south-east in 2003 (Photo: C. Adle).



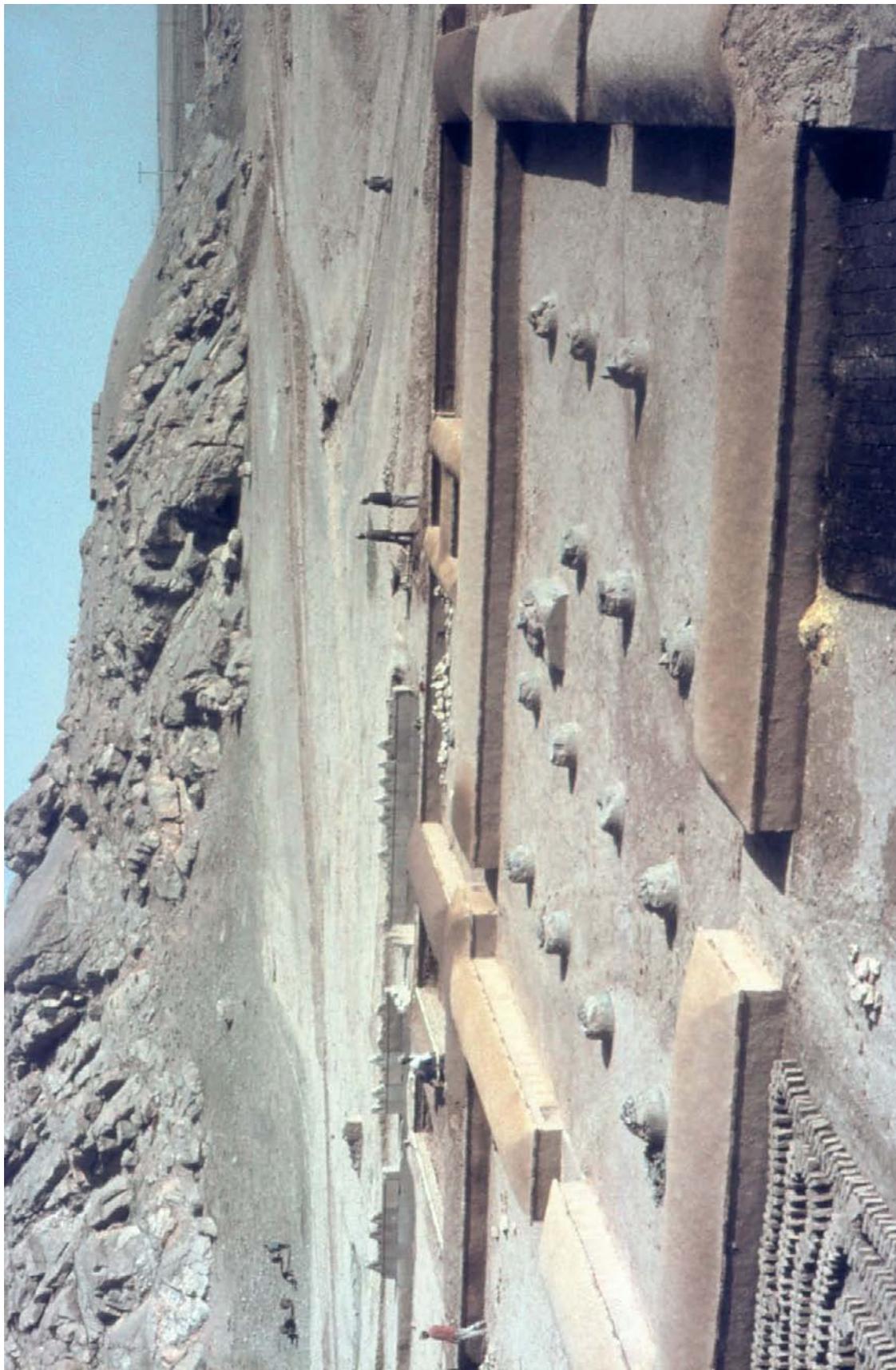
PL. 2 General view of the southern sector of the Terrace of Persepolis taken from the top of Kuh-e Rahmat in 1971. Firouz Bagherzadeh and Muhammad Mehryar are in the foreground. The Tent City constructed to celebrate the 2,500th Anniversary of the Iranian Monarchy can be seen in the background. (Photo: M. Mousavi).



PL. 3 Aerial view of the southern plain with Edifice 'E' in the foreground (Photo © K. Afhamai and W. Gambke, Persepolis 3D).



PL. 4 The reconstruction of Edifice 'E' (Photo © K. Afhami and W. Gambke, Persepolis 3D).



PL. 5 Columned hall 'C' with the throne plinth. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72. (Photo: M. Mousavi).



PL. 6 Building 'H' from the south-east. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



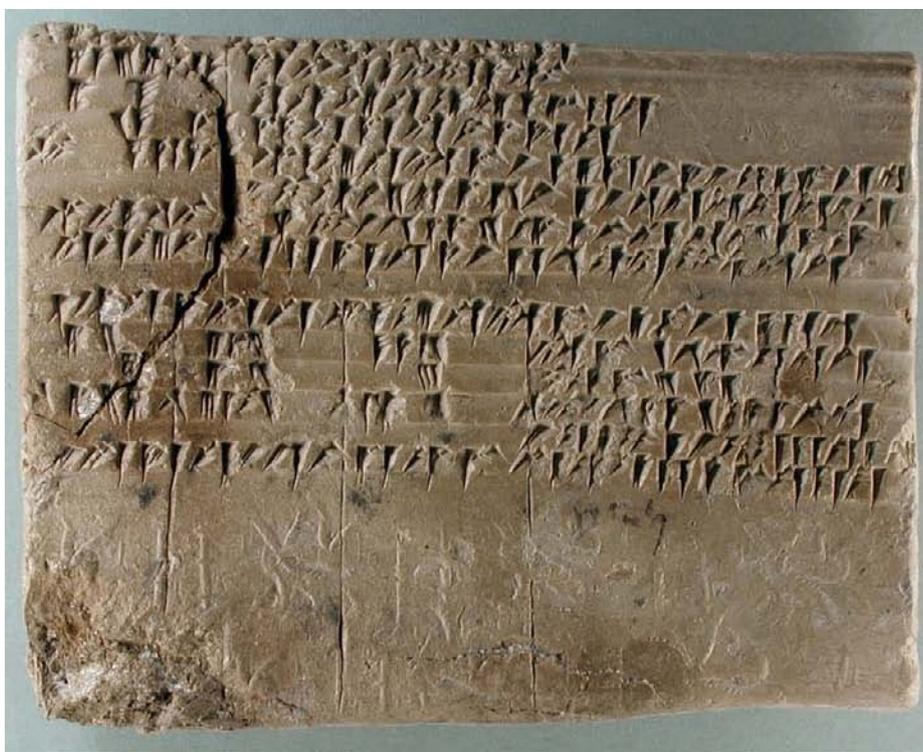
PL. 7 Building 'H'. The excavation of one of the columned halls with burnt beams and column shafts. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971-72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



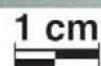
PL. 8 Building 'H'. The burned two-columned hall. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1971–72 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



PL. 9 General view of the excavated sector of the fortifications on top of Kuh-e Rahmat. Tadjvidi's excavations, season 1970–71 (Photo: M. Mousavi).



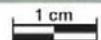
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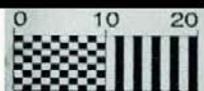
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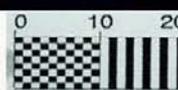
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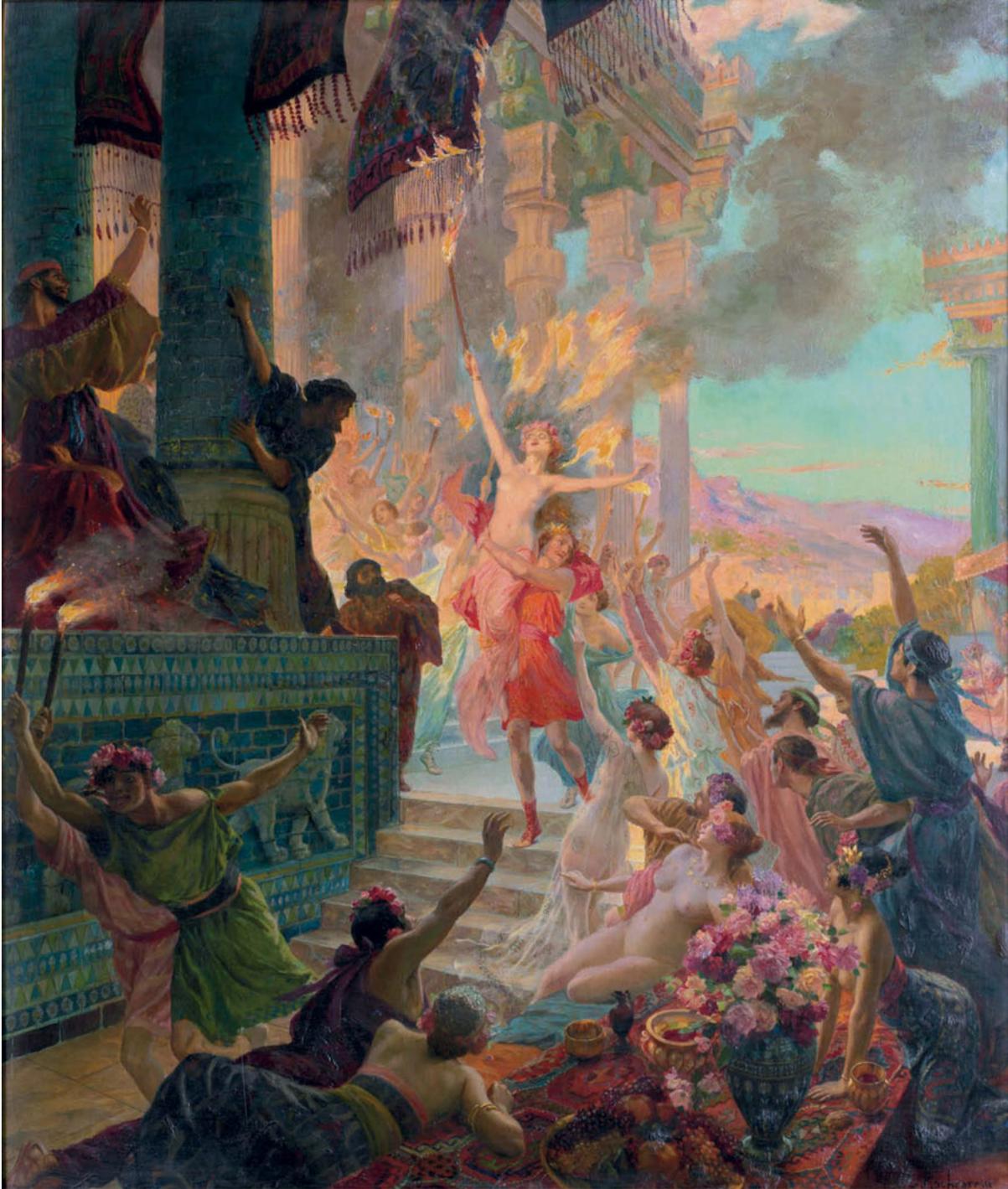
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PL. 10 A selection of the Persepolis Fortification tablets (Photo: Persepolis Fortification Archive Project, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).



PL. 11 *L'incendie de Persépolis* by Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse, 1913 (Photo © Christie's, London).



PL. 12 One of the gold tablets from the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).



PL. 14 Square stone plaque (12.5 cm) in Egyptian Blue found in 1948 in the 32-columned Hall (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).



PL. 13 Fragment of a gold sheathing found by Sami in March 1941 in the southern rooms of the Apadana. The piece, measuring 31 x 12 cm and weighing 289 gr, is decorated with winged bulls. Sami mentions the presence of gold nails in the same spot, which indicates that such a sheathing was once used to decorate the wooden doors of the central hall of the Apadana (Photo: the Azita Bina and Elmar Seibel collection).



PL. 15 Krefter's later and only surviving model of Persepolis, now in Berlin (Photo © Staatliche Museen Berlin).



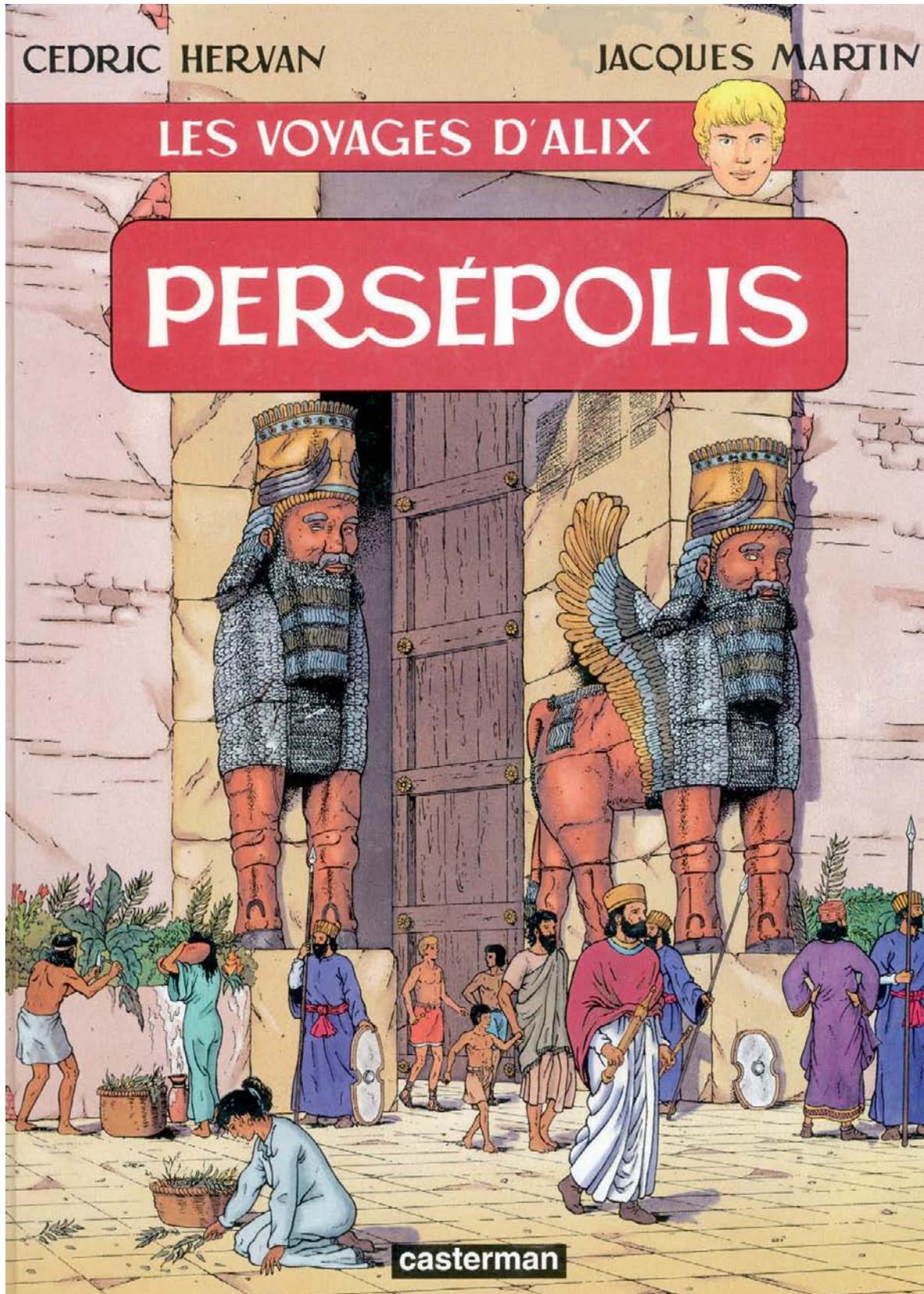
PL. 16 Reconstruction of the Persepolis Terrace and its fortifications by K. Afhami and W. Gambke (Photo © K. Afhami and W. Gambke, Persepolis 3D).



PL. 17 The new model of Persepolis by Mehdi Fathinezhad (Photo: M. Fathinezhad).



PL. 18 The eastern portico of the Apadana as reconstructed by Fathinezhad (Photo: M. Fathinezhad).



PL. 19 The Gate of All Lands on the cover of *Les Voyages d'Alix: Persépolis* (Photo © Éditions Casterman).

